

Mariachi Nueva Generacion wins third consecutive Mariachi Vargas Extravaganza

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Making it three in a row, Mariachi Nueva Generacion from Texas State University-San Marcos took first place in the group competition of the annual Mariachi Vargas Extravaganza in San Antonio, Saturday, Dec. 6 at the Municipal Auditorium.

John Lopez, coordinator of Multicultural Music, said the continuing success of the ensemble in competition is attributable to the program's long-term plan.

"We made a commitment in 2003 that we would contend every year," Lopez said. "Since then, our talent level has risen. We're just now seeing the fruits of that plan."

After putting in motion long-term plans to grow and increase the competitive level of the program in 2003, the group steadily improved its standing in the competition. In that year, the group won 3rd place, followed up by 2nd place performances in 2004 and 2005. Moreover, Lopez said that this year was a watershed in the history of the program, with this year's group being able to achieve 1st place success with significant representation from freshman and sophomore members.

"We started with a certain group of students who had been with us several years. This year's group was very young," Lopez said. "The program has gotten strong enough that our talent level has become so high."

Furthermore, by bringing an additional ensemble to compete in group competition as well as two solo vocalist competitors for the first time, Texas State increased its representation from years past. Lopez said that although the additional competitors did not place, their performances were a testament to the growth of the program, as well as the continuing efforts to achieve their long-term goals. He hopes eventually to have the opportunity for the ensemble to compete in other top competitions nationwide.

"The most important thing for us this year was expanding Texas State's footprint at the competition," Lopez said. "Our goal never was to stop with the Mariachi Vargas Extravaganza. Our goal was always to keep growing the program."

Lopez is quick to point out tremendous efforts from the group's arranger, Cirilo Campos, senior, as well as from their student leader, Vanessa Moreno, junior. He said that outstanding group leadership along with the talent of the performers is what has allowed the group to continue achieving its goals and successes.

"They have all risen to a very high level."



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