On the stage

Mariachi band with 114-year heritage will play at Del Mar

By Michael Wright
Special to the Caller-Times

Mariachi's past, present and future will hit the stage in Corpus Christi on Saturday as the world famous Mariachi Vargas de Tecalitlan headlines the Fourth annual Sparkling City Mariachi Festival.

Billing itself as "el mayor mariachi del mundo" (the best mariachi in the world), Mariachi Vargas is a 13-piece band that plays the beloved Mexican folk music and mixes it with symphonic elements. They will play at Del Mar College's Richardson Performance Hall.

The band has been together for 114 years, said the show's producer Cynthia Munoz, who have been playing with the group for the past 40 years.

Mariachi derives from the French term "mariage," or wedding, and more from the root of Maximo, who ruled Mexico as puppet of Napoleon II in the mid-19th century.

The band's performance will be a day of vocal and instrumental competition among area high school musicians. Munoz said the festival is crucial to keeping the music alive.

"They really feel like the future of this 100-year plus tradition of Mexican folk music is being carried by students in the United States," she said. "The concert is really interesting because this is an event that attracts multiple generations. We'll have young kids attending this event with their parents and grandparents."

The mariachi competition will run throughout Saturday and features students from EUHS, King High School in Kingsville, Moody High School and other schools throughout the area.

IF YOU GO
What: Sparkling City Mariachi Festival
Where: Richardson Performance Hall at Del Mar College
When: Vocal contest is Friday, Mariachi contest runs through Saturday.
Concert begins at 7:30 p.m.
Cost: Ticket prices for the Saturday evening concert range from $20 to $100 and are available online at www.delmar.edu/ric/research and through the Richardson Performance Hall Box Office Tuesday through Friday from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m.
Information: contact the Box Office at 988-2225.

See MARIACHI, 5

Hot 5
Singles
1. "Rolling in the Deep" Adele
2. "The Edge of Glory" Lady Gaga
4. "The Lazy Song" Bruno Mars
5. "E.T." Katy Perry feat. Kanye West

Albums
1. "21" Adele
2. "Turtleneck & Chain" The Lonely Island
3. "Lovestrong" Christina Perri
4. "Goblin" Tyler, The Creator
5. "American Idol Top 4 Season 10" Various Artists

By MELISSA NUNES STAFF WRITER
Marius Limas
MARIACHI
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The winners will end up on stage at 7:30 p.m. with the Mariachi Vargas.

Munoz said Corpus Christi will host fans from across the country.

"They have a real core audience of mariachi aficionados that will go everywhere to see them," she said.

"There will be people flying in from San Antonio, they're coming in from Dallas, from Austin."

The band formed in 1897 in Tecalitlan, Jalisco, the same place mariachi music was born.

It began to flourish after the Mexican Revolution in 1910 facilitated more movement from rural to urban areas.

While many mariachi groups have picked up mainstream influences and mariachi has spread into American music from George Strait to Lady Gaga, Mariachi Vargas has taken a very conservative approach, Munoz said.

Originally, the group consisted of a guitar-like instrument, a violin and a harp, but as the years progressed, more instruments were added. While the brass instruments that give the music its signature sound made their first appearances in the genre in the 1940s, it wasn’t for another decade that Mariachi Vargas added the trumpets.

Saturday’s concert will be more orchestral than folk, Munoz said.

The 13 members will sound more like 70.

At the center of that sound is the music hall itself, according to Munoz, who notes it has undergone a multimillion-dollar renovation.

"They spent that money in the right place," she said. "It’s got amazing sound and light."

CLUBS
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VARIETY

CORPORUS CHRISTI

CASSIDY’S IRISH PUB: 601 N. Water St., 884-7873.

DOCTOR ROCKIT’S: 709 N. Chaparral St., 884-7854. Today and Saturday: 10 p.m. to 2 a.m., EWT. Cover: $5. Sunday, 10 p.m. to 2 a.m., Blindfold. Cover: $4. Wednesday, 10 p.m. to 2 a.m., Goodnight. Cover: $4.

EXECUTIVE SUNF CLUB: 309 N. Water St., 884-7873. Today: 8 p.m., Cruise Control. No cover. Saturday: 8 p.m., Rankin Twins. No cover. Wednesday: 8 p.m., Open mic night. No cover. Thursday: 8 p.m., Starbucks Revue. No cover.


MARTIN BAR: 6011 Everhart Road, 814-2011. Thursday: 9:30 p.m. to 12:30 a.m. Little Talk. No cover.

PELICAN LOUNGE: 1431 S. Padre Island Drive, 482-8272. Saturday: 9:30 p.m. to 11:30 p.m., Cruise Control. No cover.


TWEETY’S SPORTS BAR & GRILL: 4710 Kosstal Rd., 884-7400 or 353-3304. Today: 9 p.m., His Hop Show with Dark Street. No cover. Saturday: 9 p.m., Good-Nite Avenue. No cover.

PORT ARANSAS


TARPSIC ICE HOUSE: 321 N. Aillster St., 239-3553. Today-Sunday. All day annual music bash. Cost: $5.99 each day.

Compiled by Tina Vasquez