

CONEXIÓN

18

la onda

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Plácido Domingo: 'Should it happen tomorrow, I would fall to my knees to give thanks to God for such a career.'

— www.brainyquote.com



Check it out

Ford Motor Company's 13th Annual Mariachi Vargas Extravaganza is more than just a concert by the world's greatest mariachi group. It's a week of activities, many of them free, which celebrate the artistry and tradition of mariachi music.

Sunday, Nov. 25 - Mariachi Mass at Mission San Jose, 6710 San Jose Drive. Noon. Free.

Monday, Nov. 26 - News conference announcing the week's events at Mi Tierra Restaurant & Bakery, 218 Produce Row. 2 p.m. Free.

Tuesday, Nov. 27 - Opening reception for mariachi themed art exhibit, Centro Cultural Aztlan, 1800 Fredericksburg Road, Suite 103. 6 p.m. Free.

Wednesday, Nov. 28 - Members of Mariachi Vargas de Tecalitlan talk about their music during Noche de Cultura, Instituto de México, 600 Hemisfair Plaza. 7 p.m. Free.

Thursday, Nov. 29 - Student mariachi groups perform during Serenata de Rio, Rivercenter Mall Lagoon, 849 E. Commerce St. 6 p.m. Free.

Friday, Nov. 30 - Student mariachi groups compete after a day of workshops with Mariachi Vargas. Municipal Auditorium, 100 Auditorium Circle. Tickets required. Call (210) 225-3353.

Saturday, Dec. 1 - Local mariachi groups perform during the Mariachi Connection Jam, Mariachi Connection, 2106 W. Commerce St. 12:30 p.m. Free.

Saturday, Dec. 1 - 'El Mejor Mariachi del Mundo' takes the stage after winners of the student competitions perform, Municipal Auditorium, 100 Auditorium Circle. 7:30 p.m. Tickets \$20 to \$100 through Ticketmaster.



COURTESY PHOTOS

ABOVE: Steeven Sandoval, violinist for Mariachi Vargas de Tecalitlan, performs during last year's extravaganza. BELOW: Mariachi Halcon, from Zapata High School, celebrate after winning the first place in the High School category during the 2006 event.



Mariachi Vargas Extravaganza

MELISSA RENTERÍA
Conexión

When Mariachi Vargas de Tecalitlan takes the Municipal Auditorium stage Dec. 1, the performance will be another lesson for student mariachis aspiring to be like the world-renowned musicians.

The lessons in mariachi showmanship and musical expertise kick off this month for the more than 1,000 students from across the country expected to participate in Ford Motor Company's 13th annual Mariachi Vargas Extravaganza.

The eight-day event, which includes mariachi workshops, student competitions and a mariachi-inspired art exhibit, unfolds Sunday, Nov. 25, with a mariachi Mass at Mission San Jose.

Other highlights of the extravaganza include Serenata en el Rio on Thursday, Nov. 29, when student mariachi groups perform at the Rivercenter Mall lagoon, and Noche de Cultura at Instituto Cultural de México as two members of Mariachi Vargas perform and talk about their music.

Mariachi Vargas headlines the weeklong event with a 7:30 p.m. concert Saturday, Dec. 1, at Municipal Auditorium. Tickets for the concert, ranging from \$20 to \$100, are available through Ticketmaster.

Mariachi Vargas Extravaganza started as a three-day event and expanded to eight days in 2005. The expansion is modeled after the annual Mariachi Encuentro Internacional in Guadalajara, Mexico.

"It's been fun to be a part of its growth. Mariachi Vargas is what every mariachi aspires to be, and it's inspiring to see more students wanting to learn mariachi," said Cynthia Muñoz, producer and promoter of the annual extravaganza.

The extravaganza's growth reflects mariachi music's growing popularity in the United States, she said.

Since the 1990s, there has been an increase in mariachi classes in high schools and universities and in places where mariachi music might seem unexpected.

Harvard University will participate in this year's Mariachi Vargas Extravaganza, competing in the group and individual vocalist categories.

Other students will compete in categories ranging from elementary to college and university level.

"From the very beginning of this event, the thought was to encourage Latino kids to seek an education, not necessarily to become professional mariachi musicians, but to know what opportunities are out there," said Muñoz, who has performed mariachi music since she was 11.

"This event is great exposure for them," she said.
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