

# Mariachi Major & Minor Scholarship Campaign



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SCHOOL OF MUSIC

Latin Music Studies

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## SCHOOL OF MUSIC

The Texas State Mariachi program started in 1997 as a student led ensemble. However, by 2003 it became an official class taught by Professor John Lopez, Head of Latin Music Studies. Since its creation, TXST's Mariachi Nueva Generación has earned much respect around the state as an outstanding performing ensemble. They also compete regularly at the Mariachi Vargas Extravaganza where they have an impressive record winning eight first place trophies in eleven years. The TXST Mariachi faculty now consists of John Lopez, Michelle Quintero & Miguel Guzman. In more recent years, the Mariachi faculty set their sights on creating an academic legacy that will educate and inspire generations to come.

In 2018, Texas State University unveiled the Minor in Mariachi, which was a landmark achievement for its time. This degree allowed music education majors to take courses in Mariachi teaching that will serve them well in their careers as future mariachi educators. The 2022 freshman class of the new BM in Mariachi Education started their degree Fall of 2022. Along with the Minor in Mariachi, the BM in Mariachi Education degree will prepare our students for the challenges of starting, teaching and maintaining a successful Middle School & High School Mariachi program. Students take courses in playing the Guitarrón, Vihuela, Mariachi Violin, Mariachi Trumpet, Mariachi Voice and many others. And the Mariachi Majors will now take private lessons from the best Mariachi instructors around on their instrument/voice. I cannot overstate how groundbreaking this is for our students and culture.

That said, any new program needs financial assistance especially in the form of scholarships for these wonderful students. I am including in this presentation images and stories of our talented students so you can see and hear directly from them. These are humble and well deserving students with a bright future as music educators. I hope one or more of these stories inspires you to donate to our LMS scholarship fund. With the incredibly high cost of higher education these days, students need all the help they can get. I am committed to providing a \$1,000 or more scholarship to every Mariachi Major and Minor in our program. This is an enormous task, but I am dedicated to their success. Please consider becoming a “*Madrina*” or “*Padrino*” to one or more of our students. The students, faculty and I would be eternally grateful. I thank you for your consideration and please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any questions or if I can be of further assistance.

Sincerely,

  
Amanda C. Soto

**Music Education Coordinator & LMS Research Faculty**

**Email: [asoto@txstate.edu](mailto:asoto@txstate.edu)**

**Phone: 512-245-3947**

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## Elma Garcia from El Paso, TX

Hello! My name Elma Garcia and I am a vocalist and violinist for Mariachi Nueva Generación here at Texas State! I come from El Paso, TX and I have been playing and performing mariachi music for 6 years through the mariachi programs at my middle school and high school. I grew up surrounded by traditional Mexican music because of my father, who is a vocal mariachi performer and my first music teacher.

I love the range of emotions I experience when I perform mariachi for an audience, and I am extremely grateful to have the opportunity to refine my skills as a musician through the music of my ancestry here at Texas State University. I want to help familiarize all people to the world of Mariachi and its music by continuing to perform with mariachi ensembles around the world.





## Steven Bass from Eagle Pass, TX

Hi, my name is Steven Bass, born and raised in Eagle Pass Texas. I play the trumpet and have a love for singing. The city I come from is a humble one enriched with Mexican culture since it is a border town. I grew to love the Mexican culture and have a passion for it and eventually discovered mariachi music after seeing my siblings participate in the ensemble. I started playing mariachi music at the age of 13 and continued until college. I am proud to say that I was able to make it into the top mariachi ensemble at Texas State University as a freshman.

My passion and dream are to spread this great culture of Mexican music to every corner of Texas and beyond. I am also deeply committed to passing on this wonderful musical tradition to students at all levels. I will continue to promote this music to those who connect to it culturally, as well as, to educate and share this musical culture with the public. I am grateful that I am able to study and perform a music that represents my family and culture. I must give credit to my parents for raising me well and providing a cultural foundation that I feel proud of.





## Ernesto Saldaña from Roma, TX

Hello, my name is Ernesto A. Saldana, and I am from Roma, Texas. I play the violin and my major is Music Studies with a concentration in mariachi. Mexican music has always been part of my life. Both of my parents introduced me to mariachi at an early age, and since then, I have been in love with it. However, it was in middle school where I had the opportunity to be in one of the best mariachi programs in the nation.

What I enjoy most about mariachi music is playing Sones Jaliscienses, which are songs from Jalisco. This type of song gives a lot of power to the mariachi group when played correctly. Some of my future goals are to be able to teach students the importance of mariachi music and be able to give the younger generations the same opportunities I had.





## Jaqueline Fierro from El Paso, TX

Hello, my name is Jaqueline Fierro, and I was born in El Paso, TX, and raised in Lubbock, TX. I play the violin, and I study voice in the Mariachi major. I was introduced to mariachi by my mom. She would always play Latin music around the house, especially mariachi. By fate, when I moved from El Paso to Lubbock, I moved right down the street from the only middle school in Lubbock to have a mariachi program. I stayed in it because I wanted to make my grandparents proud as I was the only grandchild who did not speak fluent Spanish. I thought that this would make us connect more, which it did. I continued mariachi in high school. My senior year was when I decided to pursue my passion for music.

I enjoy mariachi because it represents everyday life. It makes people happy, or it can make you sad with its relatable storytelling. It makes people excited to hear since they are meaningful songs heard from their childhood. In the future, I hope to direct a middle school or high school mariachi ensemble. I would also like to be a clinician for voice since it is one instrument that gets neglected the most in mariachi. I want to continue learning and traveling to gain more experience and eventually attend graduate school in the future.





## Mario Gonzalez from San Antonio, TX

My name is Mario Gonzalez, and I was born and raised in San Antonio, Texas. My major is Music Studies with a concentration in Mariachi. I have been playing guitarrón for 7 and a half years. I first picked up the guitarrón when I was in the 6<sup>th</sup> grade. I initially joined mariachi because my mother forced me to try it for one year. However, I ended up loving it and continued my mariachi journey throughout Middle School, High School and now here at Texas State.

What I enjoy about mariachi is the history that is behind it because I feel as if I am honoring my culture and, in a way, helping to keep it alive and thriving. Musically, I enjoy the range of tone I can play and the depth of a story that a mariachi player can tell with their instrument or voice. Another thing I love about mariachi is the community that comes with it. Everyone can be so tight and familiar with each other, which in some other genres of music may not always be the case. Some of my goals are to increase my knowledge of this genre and music in general. I would also like to perfect my technique for the guitarrón and the other instruments of mariachi so that I can help establish the next generation of mariachi and help grow the community and make it better.





## Kassandra Gonzalez from Edcouch-Elsa, TX

Hi, my name is Kassandra Gonzalez. I grew up in a small town named Edcouch-Elsa in the Rio Grande Valley. I started playing mariachi in sixth grade at the age of 11 years old. At my school district, Edcouch-Elsa ISD, we only had mariachi, band, conjunto and estudiantina to choose from for music ensembles. My passion for mariachi grew when I started learning the songs that I danced to in Ballet Folklorico. I was then interested in learning more about the background and how mariachi has evolved.

I attended my first Mariachi Vargas Extravaganza competition in San Antonio when I was 16 years old. This experience was an eye opener for me. I was so sheltered that I believed that mariachi was only well known in the valley. So, it was very surprising to not only see mariachi groups from the valley, but from San Antonio, Houston, Dallas, and even Las Vegas and Arizona.

That revelation is what has led me to my goal, which is to help schools build good mariachi programs in Texas. Being in the mariachi program directed by Marcos Garcia, Mario Ferrer and Michael Sital shows me that you can build a good program with not only your knowledge of mariachi, but also your passion for it.





## Adalina Hernandez from Eagle Pass, TX

My name is Adalina Hernandez, and I come from the small border city of Eagle Pass, Tx. I am a junior at Texas State University, where I am pursuing a degree in Music Studies, with a concentration in Voice, a minor in Mariachi, and all-level teacher certification. I currently study voice under Professor Michelle Quintero, where I study mariachi and classical repertoire and vocal techniques. I also perform a wide variety of choral music from around the world as part of the mixed choir, University Singers, under the direction of Professor Craig Aamot. I have also begun studying the musical styles of other Latin American music by participating as a vocalist in Texas States University's Salsa del Rio ensemble, under the direction of Professor Juan Rosaly.

I am also a member of the Texas State Mariachi group, Lince De Oro, where I sing and play trumpet under the direction of Professor Miguel Guzman. My mariachi education began in the second semester of senior year in high school, and I have continued it in college, falling in love with the performance and education facets of mariachi and music, in general. One day I hope to provide opportunities for every student to grow in their love and knowledge of music.





## Genesis Leal from Rio Grande City, TX

Hello, my name is Genesis Leal, and I am a music studies major with a minor in Mariachi. I was born in Turlock, California and raised in Rio Grande City, Texas. I am a violinist who has studied under Dr. Ledbetter, Professor Bird, and Dr. Asbell.

Growing up I always felt like there was a piece of myself missing. I became curious about the music of my culture when the middle school mariachi performed for my elementary class. The more I dove into mariachi, the more I grew as a person, understanding the stories woven into the songs we sing and the notes we play. Being in a mariachi ensemble gives me a sense of leadership. It is also an outlet to express myself through performance. I am grateful to be studying in the Latin Music Studies program here at Texas State University.





## Daniel Robles-Villa from San Antonio, TX

Hi, my name is Daniel Robles Villa, and I am from San Antonio, Texas. I play the vihuela and am studying Music Education with a mariachi minor. Growing up in a Hispanic household I was introduced to mariachi music at an early age because my family would listen to it all the time. It was always played in the house, on the car radio, and especially at family gatherings. I had already picked up the guitar on my own but when I saw that mariachi was offered at my high school, I was eager to join as it was something different.

I enjoy playing mariachi because it makes me happy. I love listening to and playing the music. I also enjoy playing because it is a way for me to connect with my culture more. Mariachi has been around for many years and the fact that I am able to play mariachi and hopefully teach mariachi to younger kids brings me joy. In the future, I hope to graduate and earn my degree here at Texas State and become a music educator. I want to teach mariachi and inspire younger generations with this beautiful music.





## Joshua Chairez from Mercedes, TX

Hello, my name is Joshua Chairez, and I am from Mercedes, Texas. I am a vihuela and harp player, and my major is music education with a focus in classical percussion. I first began my journey into the mariachi world when I was a child. I was born listening to mariachi music all around the house and pretty much everywhere I went. My interest in mariachi didn't spark until I got to high school and found out that we had a mariachi program. I sadly did not join the mariachi program until my senior year of high school because of my busy schedule with marching band and concert band.

I plan to graduate in the Fall of 2023 and pursue a teaching career. I want to ultimately teach at a high school or middle school as a band director or percussion director also having a mariachi program. I want to give my students a bright future in the mariachi world and teach them the beauty of this amazing genre of music.





## Matthew Moore from Harlingen, TX

Hello my name is Matthew Moore. I am a violinist from Harlingen, Texas, currently pursuing a Bachelor of Music, majoring in Music Studies with a concentration in violin and minoring in Mariachi. I am studying under the tutelage of Dr. Lynn Ledbetter and have performed in a variety of ensembles including the Texas State Symphony Orchestra, Mariachi Lince de Oro, Mariachi Nueva Generacion, Orquesta del Rio, Salsa del Rio, and a variety of chamber groups. I started doing mariachi my senior year of high school because I wanted to do more than just orchestra. After doing it for a year and enjoying it, I decided to participate in the mariachi minor at Texas State on a whim, but now I love playing mariachi and Latin music. I have now been performing mariachi for 4 years and am considering continuing my studies, pursuing Latin Music Performance or Musicology at a graduate level.





## Daisy Solomon from Edinburg, TX

Hello, my name is Daisy D. Solomon. I grew up in Edinburg, TX and began playing violin as a sixth grader at the age of 12. Mariachi music has played a major role in my upbringing as my mother and grandmother often listened to it. I gained an interest in learning mariachi when I first entered high school and saw it was offered. I began to play so I could discover what my mother and grandmother heard in mariachi that made them connect so deeply with the music. I started finding so many correlations between the music that I was playing and my own life. Soon enough I came to understand how relatable this music could be. This grew my love and interest for mariachi. Through my experiences, I discovered there is a whole world of culture and music I didn't fully comprehend. Playing mariachi brings me a sense of connection, not only with my mother and grandmother, but also my culture and all its beauty. Seeing how happy it makes my family and the audiences for which I perform, motivates me to continue sharing my love for this beautiful genre of music.





## Sofia Gonzalez from Kyle, TX

My name is Sofia Gonzalez, and I grew up in Kyle, Texas. My mother introduced me to mariachi music when I was 9 years old when she enrolled me into the San Marcos Mariachi Academy. During my time at the academy, I started learning vihuela and eventually learned guitarrón. Throughout middle school and high school, I was also part of the mariachi programs at Hays CISD. I attended the San Marcos Mariachi Academy up until I graduated from Lehman High School in 2019.

So, as you can see, I grew up playing mariachi music. By the time I reached high school, mariachi was a part of my identity which I did not want to let go. Playing music with others brings me an overwhelming sense of happiness. The Latin Music Studies program at Texas State allowed me to continue performing the music that I love. This is one of the few ways I am able to connect with my Mexican parents. And as a first-generation Latina student, I want to make my parents proud.



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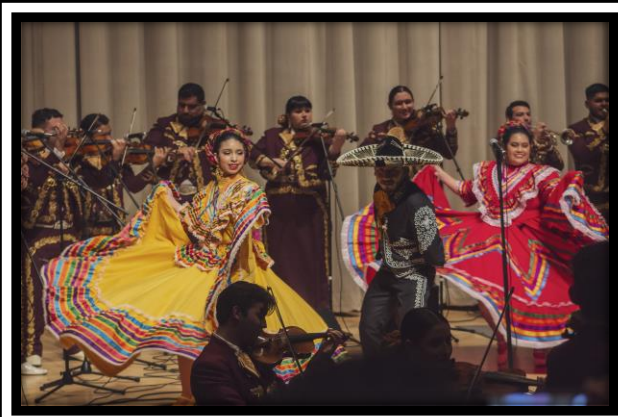
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