



Seniors Jason Dickie and Patrick Tran, and junior Yesenia Castillo, Noelle Tutunjian, and Alana Stevenson will all attend All-State. (Photo by Taylor Johnson)

Cougars qualify for all-state honor band

By Brook Barnes

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The Clovis High band has 11 students that qualified for the California High School All-State Honor Band this year.

It is the 55th annual band hosted by the California Band Directors Association. On Sunday, Feb. 19, all students that have a spot in the band or orchestra will perform at the conference. Guided by six different conductors, the state of California will provide a performance from top high school musicians.

The following students made it into the band: freshman Tanner O'Brien, playing the contra bass clarinet; sophomore Kevin Becker playing the tuba; junior Yesenia Castillo playing the b-flat clarinet; junior Noelle Tutunjian playing the e-flat clarinet; juniors Michael Gennaro, Joshua Schoenherr, and Katelyn Leal playing trumpet; junior Kevin Vue playing the tuba; junior Alana Stevenson playing the oboe; senior Jason Dickie playing the contra bass clarinet; and senior Patrick Tran playing the b-flat clarinet.

There is one conductor for each band or orchestra category. The Clovis high students will be conducted by only one or two depending on their instrument.

The conductors are highly experienced musicians, and it is an honor for CHS students to personally work with them one on one.

The preparation for making All-State starts months ahead, and it is clear that dedication is key.

Junior Michael Gennaro plays the trumpet, and this is his first time playing at All-State. Gennaro explained his process of preparing which led him to his success.

Gennaro said, "Over the summer you prepare which music you will audition with, because things get hectic when the school year and marching band starts. You usually record over Thanksgiving break and then submit your tape by December."

After not making the cuts last year he was upset and knew what he had to do to make the qualifications this year.

Gennaro said, "Not making it last year was a little upsetting. So this year I felt much better about my tape and worked a lot harder because I really wanted to make it."

Gennaro was accepted into the orchestra group, playing the trumpet. If a student were to make it into the band, they would have to learn a whole new set of music to play for the judges. With the orchestra, the students are given set music.

Gennaro said, "You have to know a broad amount of music. You have to know how to play major and minor scales and you have to be prepared to play what ever they ask you to."

After students submit their tape of recorded music, they patiently wait for results to be posted. On finding out if they have been accepted or not, the students explained that the feeling is a thrill of a lifetime.

Junior Yesenia Castillo explained how her accomplishments have paid off for her excitement.

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Castillo said, "It's really hard to make it and I was really discouraged, but when I found out I made it I was overwhelmed and really happy."

Castillo did not make the cuts her sophomore year, and therefore was hesitant to try out again.

Castillo said, "I had the mindset to try my hardest but was still anxious and afraid. But my teacher encouraged me and pushed me to make me better and I thank her for that".

Once the student has made it, they cannot be cut.

Though Clovis High made it as one, the individuality of the hobby has brought competition for the musicians.

Castillo said, "I just know that there are a lot of other phenomenal players out there, so the completion is high."

After being chosen to play in an honor band, the students will never forget the experience and process.

Gennaro said, "I am more excited for the experience I will get. I will be working with the assistant director of the New York Floor Harmonic, which is huge. You go and play with these other really great players and you come back

with a different attitude and wanting to do better."

Castillo said, "I like the competition more, because it's more of a drive to accomplish what you want to accomplish. Overall, I would like to thank my brother for always supporting me and always giving me the supportive criticism that I need."

For the first time in eight years members of the band and orchestra will be teaming up with the play production, Meredith Willson's *The Music Man*.

There will be a live pit playing all soundtracks for the musical. Students from seven different elementary schools, Clark Intermediate, and Clovis High are all working together to put up a one of a kind performance.

Susan Kehler noted that the production this year is very expensive, but worth the money because it is an experience that everyone will be able to enjoy.

The preparation started months ago, and the production will be Feb. 2, 3, 4, 9, 10, and 11 of 2012 at 7:30 pm.

Students or parents can purchase tickets at cusd.com/tickets or at CHS in the Yale Office. The prices are \$10 for students, and \$12 for adults.