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4 Bonita Unified Musicians Selected to Showcase Talents in Tournament of Roses Honor Band

SAN DIMAS/LA VERNE – Bonita Unified will be well-represented at the 2024 Rose Parade on New Year’s Day after four District students – three from Bonita High School and one from San Dimas High School – were selected to perform in Pasadena City College’s 2024 Tournament of Roses Honor Band.

Bonita High seniors Aidan Millan (trombone), Lake Ericson (cymbals) and Tatiana Arreola-Chavez (mellophone) will be joined by San Dimas High junior Anthony Bailey (clarinet). Millan will make his third consecutive appearance in the prestigious parade, while Ericson is returning for the second year in a row. Arreola-Chavez and Bailey are both making their Tournament of Roses Parade debuts.

“I am very proud of the accomplishments of these three talented musicians,” Bonita High band director Jeff Bird said. “They have each worked hard individually to get here, and it’s an honor to be represented by them in this esteemed ensemble. It’s also fun for me to see them perform in an activity outside of the school band program.”

Arreola-Chavez credits Bird for providing her with opportunities to grow as a musician, honing her craft as a multi-instrumentalist – she plays trumpet, French horn and melodica, in addition to mellophone – and working hard on her timing. Her perseverance paid off, as she was selected as one of four mellophone players in the Honor Band, just one year after auditioning and not being selected.

“It was unreal seeing my name on the roster,” Arreola-Chavez said. “I’ve worked hard to improve as a musician in the last year. Working with a dedicated group of musicians is exciting for me, and I can’t wait to meet new people in the music community. I feel like my musical journey has come full circle.”

Ericson is a quick learner who can adapt his approach to fit whatever role is needed within the percussion ensemble, and has played bass drum and quads (four drums) in the BHS marching band, giving him the experience needed to play his instrument at the Honor Band level.

“I’m very excited to be a part of the Honor Band for another year,” Ericson said. “I had such an amazing experience last year, and I’m looking forward to marching, performing and spending time with my friends there again.”

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After two appearances in the Rose Parade, Millan's favorite memory is from 2022, where the Honor Band played early in the parade, channeling the energy from the lively crowd as it jumped up and down with excitement.

"It was truly an exhilarating experience," Millan said. "It's really exciting to be selected for my last time participating in the Tournament of Roses Honor Band. Through the last three years, it's definitely been one of the highlights of my year."

Bailey is in his third year as a member of the San Dimas High Royal Corps, and plays in the school's jazz ensemble. He has played clarinet since the fourth grade, choosing the instrument for the way it sounds. Bailey was driving with his father when he found out he had been chosen for Honor Band, enabling him to immediately celebrate with his family. Bailey looks forward to meeting and bonding with his peers from across southern California.

"The audition was nerve-racking, but I practiced a lot and had confidence that I could perform well," Bailey said. "I feel like band is family, especially with the Royal Corps. My bandmates and my co-director Mr. Beckford have really supported me, and that makes the recognition special. I'm excited to play in front of so many people."

Lance Beckford, a San Dimas High Class of 2001 graduate, credits Bailey for being dedicated to his instrument, with years of hard work and practice paying off by being recognized as one of southern California's top student musicians. This is the second year in a row that a Royal Corps member has been selected for the Honor Band.

"We teach the Royal Corps to concentrate on being musicians, and to go outside of their comfort zone," Beckford said. "That's important. We want our students to go out and take chances, to go to auditions and give it their best shot. It gives them more confidence and puts them out into the community and around other musicians, which leads to significant growth. This will inspire more students to audition for these events."

PHOTOS:

BUSD_SDHS_ROSEPARADE: San Dimas High School junior Anthony Bailey was selected to perform in Pasadena City College's 2024 Tournament of Roses Honor Band on New Year's Day. Bailey, who will play clarinet in the band, was chosen for the prestigious group for the first time and is one of four Bonita Unified student musicians selected to march in the parade.

BUSD_BHS_ROSEPARADE: Bonita High School seniors Tatiana Arreola-Chavez, Lake Ericson and Aidan Millan were selected to perform in Pasadena City College's 2024 Tournament of Roses Honor Band on New Year's Day. Millan is making his third consecutive appearance in the Rose Parade, Ericson is returning for the second straight year, and Arreola-Chavez will march for the first time.

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