

# SEEING THESE STARS

These Mac Band members participate in two extracurriculars and shine in both of them



## Lili Escamilla

Thanks to carefully planned transitions, freshman manages to participate in *Blue Brigade*, play *saxophone*

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For freshman Lili Escamilla, trying out for Blue Brigade was an act of spontaneity. With only a year of Lamar ballet under her belt, Escamilla decided to take a risk and hoped that the team would take a chance on her despite her relative lack of experience.

"I always loved dancing, but tryouts scared me because everyone was so talented," Escamilla said. "I went for it, and here I am."

Before dance, Escamilla played the saxophone at Lamar for three years, and continuing music in high school was a priority. Upon starting high school, she found herself a part of both programs she was interested in—Blue Brigade and Marching Band. But there was an issue: both groups practiced at the same time. Overcoming the conflict, Escamilla was able to divide a packed schedule that left her without a dull moment.

"I go to band before school on A days because I have

Blue Brigade class first period, then on B days I do band until 8 a.m. and then Blue Brigade until 9," Escamilla said. "For pep rallies, I change into my Blue Brigade outfit and then do the hall march with band. I stretch, play with the band before putting my instrument down to go to the Blue Brigade performance. For games, I spend the first half with band to go on with them at halftime, and then hand my instrument off to go dance with Blue Brigade."

Escamilla's complex routine did, however, present unforeseen problems. Missing one practice for another often leaves her behind, especially in fast-paced environments where performances are always around the corner.

"A lot of times because of morning band practice, I miss learning our Blue Brigade dances," Escamilla said. "We learn about a dance a week, sometimes two, so when I get home I have to teach myself dances."

Even with the pressure of both extracurriculars, she has learned to manage the hectic schedule and make the most of it.

"It does get stressful, there are so many things I have to remember," Escamilla said, "but I have learned to manage it, and now I don't have to stress about it."



Freshman Lili Escamilla performs at the McCallum homecoming pregame show. Photo by Naomi Di-Capua.

## Ximena de la Garza

Senior manages color guard, pursues sports medicine by staying cool under pressure

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design and visuals editor

Senior Ximena de la Garza is a sports medicine trainer and a color guard co-captain, both roles that keep them occupied during football season. De la Garza began color guard their freshman year and first became a trainer their junior year.

De la Garza was drawn to color guard in middle school, when they encountered their first marching band performance in eighth grade.

"I liked the dance aspect of it," de la Garza said. "Then, I saw them spin with rifles and sabers, and that's what really drew me in."

Post-pandemic, de la Garza diverged into sports medicine, becoming a trainer for the football team. This activity became a primary interest as De la Garza found themselves fascinated in the medical aspect of sports and aspiring to become a physical therapist.

"I chose to be a trainer because I was interested in how to take care of people who are injured," de la Garza said. "If one of the players has a concussion or a seizure, I know how to help them out."

De la Garza has successfully balanced color guard and sports medicine, thanks to careful planning. According to them, there is rarely a conflict; however, if they are required to attend a band competition, they are usually able to find another trainer to fill in for them at the game.

"Managing everything helps me with time management," de la

Garza said. "I found a way to fit them both into my schedule without too many conflicts."

During football season, de la Garza typically begins the first half with the trainers, leaving to perform with the band at halftime. Immediately after halftime, they must rush back to the sideline to begin the second half. During these hours, de la Garza can effectively manage the stress that comes with their schedule.

"Stressing is the last thing you want to do with multiple activities," de la Garza said. "It throws everything out of balance, and it's so important to handle."

Senior Ximena de la Garza performs at the McCallum vs. Crockett football halftime show. Photo by Kaya Stone.



## Genesis Ritcherson

Senior builds relationships, manages extracurriculars

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Senior Genesis Ritcherson, color guard member and social officer on the cheer team loves the people in both groups.

After a childhood full of cheerleading, Ritcherson started school cheer in sixth grade at Kealing. Three years later, she discontinued it until her junior year at McCallum. This year, Ritcherson has taken on the role as senior social officer. Her responsibilities include assisting the cheer team's appearance, designing posters and sweatshirts and boosting school spirit.

"My favorite part about being on cheer is being a leader," Ritcherson said. "I want to be someone helpful that people know."

During football season, Ritcherson's schedule is packed with both cheerleading and color guard. She joined the color guard as a freshman at Anderson High School, and the sport followed her to McCallum after she transferred last year.

"At my freshman orientation at Anderson, I met these cool people who told me to join color guard," Ritcherson said. "I said yes and I eventually got really good at it. It was a lot of fun."

Ritcherson's favorite aspect of color guard is working with the marching band.

"The people are so funny and nice," she said. "Marching band bonds people because it is so treacherous."

At football games Ritcherson switches her roles. She spends a

majority of the first half with cheer, before beginning to warm up with the color guard. Following Ritcherson's halftime flag performance, she rushes back to her fellow cheerleaders and picks her pom poms up again for the second half. Although football games are strenuous, Ritcherson has gotten used to the hustle and bustle of doubling up.

"Halftime can be really tiring," she said. "I make sure I'm drinking a lot of water throughout the day so I'm extra hydrated, but my stamina has gotten better."

While managing both activities, Ritcherson's busy schedule has also improved her communication and preparation skills.

"I have to start preparing the night before and to make sure I have everything I need for the whole day," Ritcherson said. "Sometimes, I have to bring 3 pairs of shoes for cheer, color guard, and regular school."



Senior Genesis Ritcherson performs at the McCallum vs. Navarro football halftime show. Photo by Naomi Di-Capua.

## Ramiro Hinojosa

Outgoing senior plays Friday night *football*, *euphonium*

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Senior Ramiro Hinojosa originally started playing the euphonium in eighth grade and after just a year as a musician, he decided to dive into the full-time commitment of high school marching band.

"I like music, playing and listening to it," Hinojosa said, "but mostly the people in band are great, and there's a community around it."

Marching band isn't the only activity that occupies Hinojosa's time. He has also been playing football as a right guard since freshman year. The sport calls for two elective periods, as well as morning and evening practices during the season.

Committed to both, Hinojosa ran into a problem: both band and football required lots of time, but he only had so much of it.

Starting his day early at 5:30 a.m. to get ready for 7 a.m. band rehearsal, Hinojosa then stops band at 8:30 when it's time to dress out and head to the field for 9 a.m. football class.

"Managing both is definitely tiring some days," he said. "There are some bad days, and the time management gets tough."

But that's not all. Hinojosa's most elaborate balancing act, comes during Friday night football games, where he can be seen switching out his cleats for marching shoes to perform in the halftime show of his own game. Through trial and error, however, Hinojosa has made the transition to and from the marching band show much smoother.

"I was originally marching in the show in my cleats and would keep falling, and it was stressful," Hinojosa said. "But I learned to make halftime work."

Senior Ramiro Hinojosa performs at the homecoming pregame show. Photo by Naomi Di-Capua.

