

Starting a Mariachi Program for Non-Mariachi Teachers

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Slideshow available:

https://docs.google.com/presentation/d/1a94X7Jk_vJtGRfmrXVhe7JGLe50iITxXb_wUhMTd80/edit?usp=sharing

Understanding a music and culture

Music, as we all know, is an artistic expression that provides a powerful medium for students to learn about the world through the eyes of a performer. Music curriculum also provides an opportunity for students to learn about history and culture through carefully selected music literature. Mariachi education has been a topic of discussion in the field of music education in the United States. With increasing Latino populations and the need to be culturally relevant, the demand for mariachi education is sought out by educators all over the United States.

In this clinic you'll learn how to start a successful beginner's mariachi program, instrumentation and balancing, culturally appropriate practices for uniforms, music, and how to integrate mariachi lessons using existing method books as well as when to introduce mariachi specific method books.

MY PURPOSE OF SHARING MARIACHI OUR TALK

- Don't be afraid to provide your students with culturally relevant music because of your fear of the unknown.
- Be courageous in connecting with your students and their culture.
- It's not cultural appropriation if you teach it. Mariachi music is not gatekept, on the contrary, we need more advocates.

"You don't have to be German to perform/enjoy Bach"

Loosing the fear

You don't have to be Mexican to be an advocate. You don't have to be Mexican to contribute. Music and music making transcends your cultural background. There is a word called "*Mariachi fever*", describe that once you're hooked you're hooked.

You don't need to be Mexican to play mariachi. Here's the example of John Vela:

"In December of 1977, my percussion professor, Linda Pimentel at Texas A&I asked me if I would like to learn the Guitarron and join the recently formed Mariachi Javelina. I played electric bass with the jazz band, but I had no mariachi experience. I said yes and thus my journey began. There were no resources available at the time. All we had were mimeographed sheets of lyrics and chords. Since I was used to reading jazz charts, I began to transcribe all the bass lines. The college mariachi did not have any violinists, so a marimba was used to substitute for the violins. We had about nine guitarists, four trumpets, two Vihuelas and two Guitarrones. After hearing Mariachi Vargas in September of 1979, my whole perspective changed. That was the defining moment in my life. 43 years, wow!"

Another great example is John Clark who has become one of the de facto mariachi historians and has spent thousands of hours researching and cataloging the life of mariachis and its history and evolution in Mexico.

One of the earliest and most successful mariachi programs in the U.S was directed and started by Mark Folgelquist in Wenatchee Washington and the first mariachi College Degree was developed by Dr. Jeff Nevin at Southwestern College in Chula Vista, CA.

The 3 R's

- **R**esearch and listen to mariachi music
- **R**each out to a mariachi educator and musician and ask plenty of questions of inquiry
There are plenty of facebook groups where educators share resources.
- **R**espect the music by refining your skill and knowledge of this music (as teachers, our learning never stops).

MARIACHI VOCABULARY

1. **Armonia:** The guitar family instruments. Vihuela, guitar, guitarron, guitarra de golpe. Also means to harmonize.
2. **Apagon:** Percussive muting of guitar. Can be done with open palm for certain styles but mostly done with the thenar eminence (fleshy thumb area of the palm).
3. **Jalon:** Name given to the guitarron plucking technique
4. **Manico:** Strumming pattern for armonia instruments (excluding the guitarron)
5. **Melodias:** the melodies, melodic line usually referring to the violins and trumpets in the ensemble.

Mariachi-specific specialized instruments:

- **Vihuela (Mexico):** 5 stringed guitar with about 5-8 frets, characterized by having a high-pitched timbre, typically played in the mariachi.
- **Guitarron:** 6 stringed acoustic guitar bass instrument played in octaves.
- **Guitarra de golpe:** five stringed guitar, less commonly used than the vihuela, with a mid-ranged timbre.