

LAMusArt
LIVE!

Mariachi: A Musical Celebration



VOLUME 1, ISSUE 3 STUDY GUIDE





HISTORY OF MARIACHI

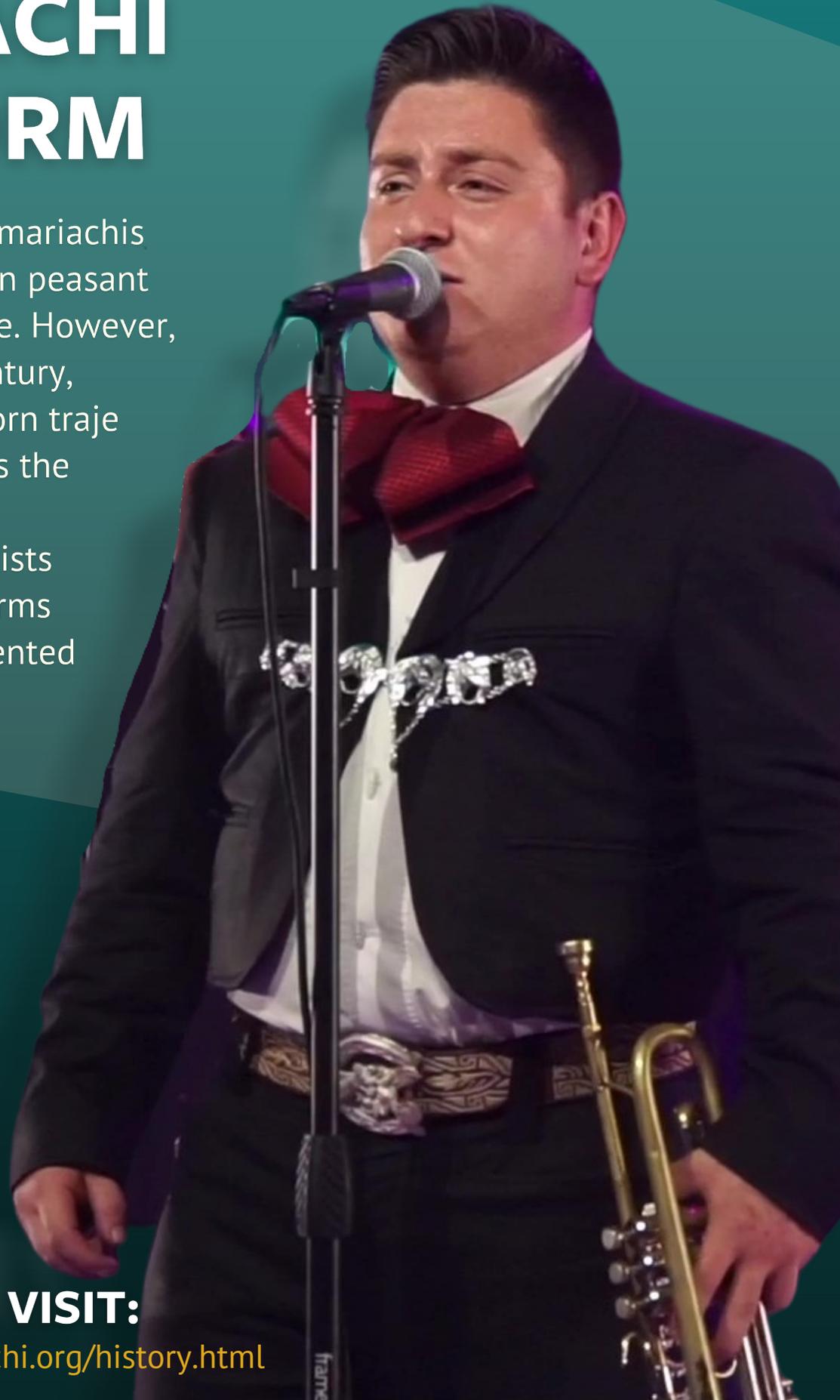
Mariachi is a small Mexican musical ensemble composed of mainly string instruments, but also includes some wind instruments and vocalists. While the word mariachi refers to the ensemble, it may also refer to an individual performer or the genre of music played by these performers as well. Mariachi is uniquely recognized as a Mexican sound and embodies both foreign and indigenous elements. In the 1700s or early 1800s, the mariachi orchestra is said to have emerged in west central Mexico. The word “mariachi” has native roots, believing to have come from the language of the Coca Indians. Instruments that typically make up a mariachi include: a vihuela, a five string guitar dating back to the Spanish Renaissance; a guitarron, a large, fretless bass guitar; a standard six-string acoustic guitar; violins and trumpets and as aforementioned, vocalists as well.

FOR MORE, VISIT:

<http://www.mariachi.org/history.html>

MARIACHI UNIFORM

At the beginning, mariachis typically dressed in peasant garb, usually white. However, since the 20th century, mariachis have worn traje de charro, which is the attire of Jaliscoan cowboys and consists of matching uniforms with tight, ornamented trousers, boots, wide bow ties, sombreros, and short jackets.



FOR MORE, VISIT:

<http://www.mariachi.org/history.html>

ABOUT THE COMPOSERS

BLAS GALINDO



Blas Galindo is a Mexican composer, teacher and administrator born on February 3rd 1910. He began his composition study with Carlos Chavez in 1931 at the National Conservatory in Mexico City. He was a part of a group of students known as “Los cuatro,” the four, who aimed to preserve the creation and performance of genuine Mexican music through pieces like Sones de mariachi. Galindo studied alongside Aaron Copland at the Berkshire Music Center in 1994, but then returned to Mexico to complete his conservatory training. After completing his training, he taught at the National Conservatory until 1947 when he became the director. This same year he was also appointed the head of the music department of the National Institute of Fine Arts. Galindos output ranges from folk-oric to neoclassic to boldly dissonant.

ERNESTO LECUONA



His elder sister Ernestina was also a classically trained pianist and began studying with her. By all accounts, Lecuona was considered a prodigy and began performing at 5 years old. The Spanish composer Joaquin Nin taught him music theory. Lecuona wrote his first composition at 11 years old. He studied at the National Conservatory in Havana where he graduated with a gold medal in 1913 and concentrated on teaching singing and piano. After graduating, he began touring throughout Europe and America where he often played duets with Ernestina. In 1917, Lecuona made a debut with his first piano recital in New York where he also began his recording career. He began performing across the Americas and would even occasionally perform on the radio. Lecuona left behind more than 1000 compositions including 176 pieces for piano and 37 orchestral pieces. His music continues to influence generations of musicians in various genres across the globe.

FERNANDO Z. MALDONADO



Fernando Z. Maldonado was a Mexican composer born on August 20th, 1917. He is best recognized for his ranchero style songs. Maldonado traveled to Monterrey, Nuevo Leon where he developed professionally in the musical field and ventured into shows and radio and formed a musical group. When his fame increased internationally in 1950, Maldonado began to write under the pseudonym, Fred McDonald. This was due to the fact that he was already signed as a pianist under the name Fernando Z. Maldonado. When his popularity in America grew and his highest sales were coming from Americans, he felt it was necessary to use this pseudonym and sign with the CBS company as an arranger, musical director, pianist and composer.

JOSÉ FELICIANO



José Feliciano is a singer and guitarist born on September 10th, 1945 in Lares, Puerto Rico. He is one of the best known Hispanic entertainers in the United States for his guitar work and his ability to reinvent rock classics with a Latin twist. By the time he was 6 years old, he taught himself the concertina by listening to records and practicing. Although he was born visually impaired, Feliciano would master the banjo, the bass, mandolin and various keyboard instruments. He discovered his instrument of choice, the acoustic guitar when he was in his early teens, which he also taught himself by listening to records. His career sparked when he released his version of “Light My Fire” by the Doors in 1968. Despite his relatively low profile, Feliciano enjoys consistent international sales.

ÁLVARO CARRILLO ALARCÓN

Álvaro Carrillo was a composer born on December 2nd, 1919, in Cacahuatpec, Oaxaca. He is regarded as one of the most influential representatives of his nation. The author and composer of over 300 songs, Carrillo often sang about the pride of his roots and his country.

Growing up, he was always seen as a good student and it was his drive and passion for education that led to his successful career. In 1936, Carrillo was recognized by his director at the school of Ayotzinapa, The director felt that Carrillo and his companions had the qualities to succeed, so he urged and supported them to develop the profession.

Carrillo actually went on to study as an Agricultural Engineer, but even after completing his degree, he felt his passion for music was a lot stronger and made the decision to dedicate himself entirely to music.



His first professional recording was “El Cometa,” (1956) but his first success was “Amor Mine” (1957) which led to an upward spiral of success. Carrillo’s songs are still performed to this day and are regarded highly by many musicians.

MEL TORMÉ



Melvin Howard Tormé, more famously known as Mel Tormé, was an American singer, songwriter, composer, arranger, pianist, drummer, actor, and author, as well as one of the most influential jazz vocalists. At just 4 years old, he began singing professionally. He composed his first hit “Lament to Love” at the age of 15 and just before he turned 17, he began touring with Chico Marx’s band. In 1943, he formed a quintet, Mel Tormé and His Mel-Tones.

In 1949, *California Suite*, became the first long playing album for Capitol Records. Years later, in 1954, Tormé recorded *Mel Tormé at the Crescendo*, his first live album. He received two Grammy Awards for best male jazz vocalist for the albums *An Evening with George Shearing and Mel Tormé* (1982) and *Top Drawer* (1983). Tormé is known for many creations, however, his most familiar song was the “The Christmas Song,” better known by its opening line, “Chestnuts roasting on an open fire” which he co-wrote with Robert Wells and was made famous by Nat King Cole in 1946.

BOB WELLS



Robert Wells was a lyricist, composer, writer, and producer. He was born on October 15th, 1922 in Raymond Washington. He is best known for “The Christmas Song,” which he co wrote with Mel Tormé. It took them 45 minutes to write the song, which as aforementioned, was given to Nat King Cole to be sung. This was not the only song that they had collaborated on, however, as they also co-wrote “County Fair” for the 1949 Disney film *So Dear to My Heart*; the title song for the Jimmy Stewart film, *Magic Town*; and “Born to Be Blue.” Wells has received 4 Emmys as writer and producer of “The Dinah Shore Chevy Show” and two Emmys for “Shirley MacLaine: If They Could See Me Now.” He also received the Peabody Award and the Sylvania Award in 1957.

PROGRAM

EL SON DE LA NEGRA

by Blas Galindo

HERMOSO CARIÑO

by Fernando Z. Maldonado

LA MALAGUEÑA

by Ernesto Lecuona

SABOR A MI

by Alvaro Carrillo

VOLVER VOLVER

by Fernando Z. Maldonado

THE CHRISTMAS SONG

by Mel Tormé and Bob Wells

MARIACHI RHYTHM GAME

Try clapping these rhythms using a metronome at 135bpm, the average speed of a mariachi song!



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The Los Angeles Music and Art School (LAMusArt) is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit arts organization whose mission is to offer the community of East Los Angeles, primarily its K-12 population, with equitable and affordable access to multidisciplinary arts education programs.

The services we provide as a cornerstone of arts education are integral to the community's cultural identity. Since its founding in 1945 by Ms. Pearle Irene Odell, LAMusArt has served over 100,000 students, employed over 200 Teaching Artists, and provided over 2,000,000 lessons.

We believe affordable and accessible arts education programs work to benefit the students and the community by expanding one's world outlook, sharpening one's creative skills, and contributing to one's social, behavioral, and academic development.





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