



MARIACHI GARIBALDI DE JAIME CUÉLLAR

STUDY GUIDE

Mariachi Garibaldi de Jaime Cuéllar

Mariachi Garibaldi de Jaime Cuéllar has delighted audiences with dynamic musicianship and lively stage presence for the past twenty years. Founded in 1994 by Jaime Cuéllar, Mariachi Garibaldi gained popularity quickly due to their constant effort to better their performance and was one of the first youth mariachis to arise in Bakersfield, Ca. Now based out of Los Angeles California, Garibaldi continues to push for excellence.

Over the years, Mariachi Garibaldi has evolved into a premier mariachi ensemble in California, led by Jimmy “El Pollo” Cuéllar, son of Jaime Cuéllar. Garibaldi has accompanied various well-known artists such as Pedro Fernandez, Espinoza Paz, Mecedades, Paquita del Barrio, Ana Barbara, Steeven Sandoval, Graciela Beltran, Maria Elena Beltran, Yolanda del Rio, Pablo Montero, Mercedes Castro, Humberto Herrera, Beatriz Adriana, among many more. They have performed on prestigious stages such as the Auditorium Theater in Chicago, Teatro Degollado, Valley Performing Arts Center, The John Anson Ford Amphitheater, Bakersfield Fox Theatre, The Chandler Center for the Arts and The Smith Center for the Performing Arts, to name a few.

Garibaldi has shared the stage with mariachi ensembles and artists

such as Mariachi Los Camperos de Nati Cano, Mariachi Vargas de Tecalitlan, Mariachi Nuevo Tecalitlan, Mariachi Imperial de México, Alejandro Fernandez, and Juan Gabriel.



02 Introduction to Mariachi Music

When beginning a discussion of the mariachi, it is helpful to start with the word “mariachi” itself. Many linguists have theorized that the word comes from the French word “mariage,” (meaning marriage). However, linguists now believed that the word “mariachi” may have come from one or more of the following sources: a word for a certain tree that exists in Cocula, Jalisco, Mexico; a word for a wooden dance platform made from the same tree; or a word for musical groups that the Coca Indians have always had in their language. The idea of the French origin of the word “mariachi” began during the French invasion of Mexico in the 1860s when the French observed musical groups

(small string ensembles) performing at Mexican wedding ceremonies. The theory of the French origin of the word continues to be popular in many sectors, perhaps because of its romantic connotations. The history and evolution of “mariachi” is described at length in Hermes Rafael’s book *Origen e Historia del Mariachi*.

Mariachi Song Forms

The music of the mariachi band is a mixture of different indigenous, as well as European and African, elements. From Europe, it borrowed many of the dance forms such as the waltz and the fandango. From Africa, it borrowed dance rhythms and melodic ideas. The forms found in mariachi music are, without a doubt, the most important element of the style. Mariachi song forms (such as the bolero, canción ranchera, son, huapango, joropo, and danzón) are always dictated by the rhythmic patterns that are performed by the guitar section of the group. This is one of the few musical genres in which text does not indicate form.

The mariachi band is Mexico’s only true surviving folkloric ensemble. The group itself has changed very little since the addition of the trumpets in the middle of the 1930s. The songs that the group performs have changed, but only to meet the demands of the listening public. A good mariachi band has a minimum repertory of at least one thousand songs. Top-flight groups have song lists that are two or three times as long. On top of that, a strong mariachi musician must know three or four arrangements of each of these songs. Mariachi performers are expected to know the music that is on the mind of the entire Mexican population.

Several Functions

Mariachi music is one of the few styles of indigenous music that serves both a utilitarian and an entertainment function. The mariachi band is used for many different occasions, such as dances, weddings, and funerals. It is not unusual to find the group serenading a young woman on the occasion of her birthday, celebrating a saint’s day, or singing to the mother of one of the band members on her birthday. People who enjoy mariachi music like it because it rekindles old memories, takes them to places that are far away, or brings back scenes of childhood.

The mariachi tradition, as it is practiced in Mexico, is one of male dominance. In the United States, women are more openly accepted as performers of this musical genre; indeed, women are an important force in the American tradition of Mexican mariachi music. If it were not for Linda Ronstadt, the contemporary vocalist who popularized mariachi music in her recordings, the genre may have been relegated to a bottom shelf in the musical lexicon of the world.

03 Introduction to Mariachi Music Cont.

Instruments

The following instruments can be found in a mariachi band:

- **Violin** - When used in the mariachi band, the violin is not altered in any way from its traditional use.
- **Vihuela** - The vihuela is a creation of the Coca Indians of Southwestern Jalisco in Mexico. It has five strings and a bowed back, and it is slightly larger than a ukelele. It is played with a thumb pick in the rasqueado (strummed) style and is the harmonic and rhythmic foundation of the mariachi band.
- **Guitar** - A standard guitar is used (not altered in any way) and serves to supplement the vihuela as a rhythmic element in the mariachi band. The guitar and the vihuela play the same rhythmic patterns and keep a strong foundation for the group. Typically, a guitar is used in a mariachi band about 98 percent of the time.
- **Guitarrón** - The guitarrón is the bass foundation of the group and is the single most important element in the mariachi band. It serves not only as the bass of the group, but it gives the group its characteristic sound. A rule of thumb is that if there is no guitarrón, there should be no performance.
- **Trumpet** - A standard trumpet is used (not altered in any way). At various times, the trumpet players are asked to perform with cup mutes.
- **Other instruments** - There are occasions when instruments such as the flute, French horn, accordion, and organ are used. These instruments are used for specific arrangements. The mariachi band contains the following parts: the violins and vocals are the top voice, the rhythm section is the harmony, and the guitarrón is the bass (like the baroque “basso continue”). The traditional mariachi has six to eight violins, two to three trumpets, one vihuela, one guitar, and one guitarrón.



04 Mexican Facts and Culture

- OFFICIAL NAME: United Mexican States
- FORM OF GOVERNMENT: Republic of federated states
- CAPITAL: Mexico City
- POPULATION: 120,286,655OFFICIAL LANGUAGE: Spanish
- MONEY: Peso
- AREA: 758,449 square miles (1,964,375 square kilometers)
- MAJOR MOUNTAIN RANGES: Sierra Madre
- MAJOR RIVERS: Rio Grande, Yaqui

Fun Facts

- Mexico introduced chocolate, corn, and chilies to the world.
- The first printing press in North America was used in Mexico City in 1539.
- Millions of monarch butterflies migrate to Mexico every year from the U.S. and Canada, though logging operations are rapidly destroying their habitat.
- Mexico City has the highest elevation and is oldest city in North America. It is also one of the largest cities in the world.
- When Spanish Conquistador Hernan Cortés arrived in 1519, the Aztecs believed he was their returning god, Quetzalcoatl, and offered him the drink of the gods: hot chocolate.
- Mexico remained under Spanish control for nearly 300 years until the Mexican people, led by a priest named Father Hidalgo, rose up against the Spanish on September 16, 1810. Hidalgo is widely considered the father of modern Mexico, and Mexican Independence is celebrated on September 15-16.

People & Culture

- Mexico is the product of a rich Indian heritage, three centuries of Spanish rule, and a shared border with the world's richest country, the United States. Today, most Mexicans are mestizos, which means they have a mix of Indian and Spanish blood.
- Throughout its history, Mexico has been home to great artists. The Maya and other Indians made impressive murals, sculptures, and jewelry. Modern Mexican artists include great painters, photographers, sculptors, and muralists.



05 | What is Folklorico?

The Spanish term for folklore is folklórico. A style of dance, music, and attire known as folklórico celebrates various Mexican traditions. Some people think that when the Spanish invaded Mexico, they brought dancing with them. However, dancing and music were already a part of the culture of Mexico's indigenous people.

Native dances changed during Mexico's colonial era (1525-1810). You could clearly observe how immigrant cultures like those from Germany and Spain had an impact.

Several states in Mexico have distinctive folklore. How are they distinguished by people? Each state has its own set of dance moves, music, and costumes. Dances display an important element for each region. They narrate tales based on mythology, events, or animals.

The jarabe tapatio is the most well-known folkloric song in the entire world. It is the folkloric dance of the state of Jalisco, known as the hat dance in English. The jarabe tapatio was designated as Mexico's national dance by the government. Children began learning the dance in the nation's schools in the 1920s.



06 | Learn More

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Mariachi Garibaldi Website: <http://mariachigaribaldi.net/>

Mariachi Garibaldi on Marian Liebowitz Artist Management: <https://www.marianliebowitz.com/mariachi>





MARIAN LIEBOWITZ

MARIAN@MARIANLIEBOWITZ.COM

619-988-0751