

JARABE MEXICANO

STUDY GUIDE



2022-2023

JM: Biography

Jarabe Mexicano invites audiences on a joyride through a versatile songbook of Mexican Folk as well as Rock & Roll, Tex-Mex, Latin Rock, and Reggae-Cumbia. Performing on stringed folk instruments accompanied by lively percussion, Jarabe's dramatic, harmonized vocals in Spanish and English have gained them the admiration from audiences across the country.



For Jarabe, every performance is an opportunity to create a deeper and more inclusive sense of family and community. As advocates for the arts and education and with a special commitment to underserved communities, Jarabe Mexicano has forged fruitful collaborations with an array of both public and private organizations, academic institutions, and government entities--all in their effort to help bridge the frontiers between musical genres, diverse cultures, and generations.



Instruments used in Jarabe Mexicano

Requinto: Smaller and higher-tuned than the classical guitar, the *requinto* (pronounced *reh-keen-toh*) is used as the lead melodic instrument in small stringed ensembles called Trios Románticos, or romantic trios.

Güira: Made from metal, the *güira* (pronounced *gwee-rah*) is used in the traditional and popular music of the Dominican Republic. In Jarabe Mexicano, it is also used to simulate the sounds and rhythms of the quijada (jaw-bone), used in the Son Jarocho genre.

Guitarrón: Meaning “big guitar”, the turtle-backed *guitarrón* (pronounced *gee-tah-rohn*) replaced the harp as the bass instrument in the mobile mariachi ensemble during the 19th century. It has six strings which are usually played in pairs, simultaneously providing a high and low note an octave apart.

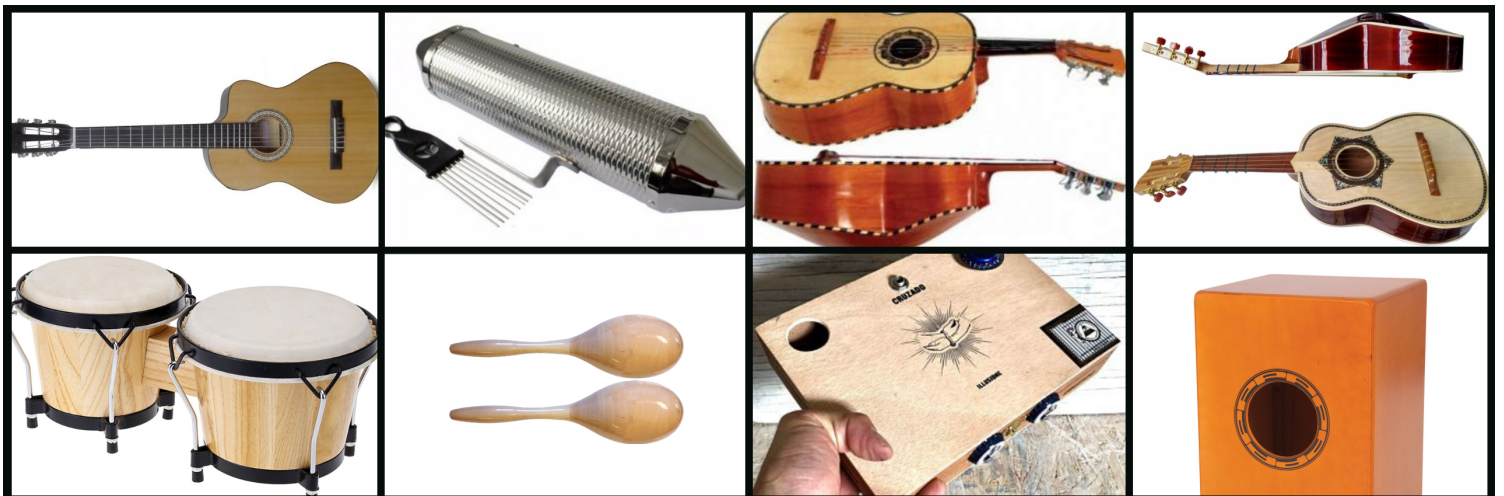
Vihuela: While it seems like a smaller version of the guitarrón, the turtle-backed *vihuela* (pronounced *vee-weh-lah*) was invented first. With five strings, it is used in mariachi ensembles, together with the guitarrón, to provide the harmonies as well as the rhythmic heartbeat for the music.

Bongó: An Afro-Cuban percussion instrument that consists of two different-sized, high-pitched drums with open bottoms. In Jarabe, it is used to support rhythmic genres originating throughout the Caribbean.

Maracas: Usually played in pairs, maracas are rattles which are core rhythmic instruments in folk traditions throughout the Caribbean. Jarabe Mexicano pays tribute to their use in popular genres played by Trios Románticos as well as other folk dance traditions.

Cigar Box: People have a long history of making musical instruments out of everyday boxes. In Jarabe Mexicano, the cigar box is played by hand and simulates the rhythmic patterns created by folkloric dancers along with other regional percussive sounds.

Cajón: An Afro-Peruvian percussion instrument, the *cajón* (pronounced *kah-hohn*) is a larger box which provides a bass beat and sometimes may include some form of “snare” or rattle component. It is now used in a variety of genres such as flamenco and jazz.



Musical Genres played by Jarabe Mexicano

Son Jarocho: (pronounced *sohm hah-roh-choh*) A traditional genre originating in the eastern Mexican state of Veracruz. Performed at community events called *fandangos*, *son jarocho* brings together Indigenous, Spanish, and African musical traditions and features rapid dance steps called *zapateado*.

Son Huasteco: (pronounced *sohm wah-steh-koh*) A traditional genre originating in the northeastern region of Mexico with roots in Indigenous and Spanish music. *Son Huasteco* is usually played by a violin and two guitars and features falsetto singing.

Ranchera: (pronounced *rahn-cheh-rah*) Named for the Mexican ranches they came from, *rancheras* are played in three different meters – polka (2/4 meter), waltz (3/4 meter), and ballad (4/4 meter) and usually describe issues of love or nostalgia. *Rancheras* adopted and played by northern Mexican ensembles are known as *Norteñas*.

Corrido: (pronounced *coh-ree-doh*) With roots that date back to the 18th century, the Mexican *corrido* came before the *ranchera* and rose in popularity during and after the Mexican Revolution at the beginning of the 20th century. Songs describe political themes, historic events, or sentimental relationships.

Joropo: (pronounced *hoh-roh-poh*) A folk style from Venezuela and Colombia which has come to define their creole music or “*música criolla*” and brings together Indigenous, Spanish, and African musical traditions. Styles vary between regional and urban as well as traditional or modern interpretations.

Bolero: (pronounced *boh-leh-roh*) A ballad style originating in Cuba in the 19th century and whose popularity spread throughout Latin America thanks in large part to Mexico’s Golden Age of film from the 1930s-50s.

Cha-Cha-Cha: A musical genre that grew out of the shift from the slower-paced Cuban *danzón* to the faster-paced *mambo*. It’s popularity with audiences outside of Latin America rose during the 1950s-60s.

Cumbia: (pronounced *koom-bee-ah*) A folk dance genre originating in Colombia which combined African drums and Indigenous wind instruments. During the 20th century, *cumbia* spread throughout Latin America and took on musical characteristics of each region that adopted it.

Reggae: With *mento*, a traditional folk music of Jamaica, as it’s back bone and ska and rocksteady as its precursors, reggae further developed during the 1960s-70s to include other styles such as American R&B and funk. Lyrics usually center around social and political commentary as well as personal sentiments.

Tex-Mex: A musical genre which began to develop in Texas at the turn of the 20th century and combines Latin and American styles of music such as *mariachi*, *norteño*, and *cumbia* with pop, rock, and R&B.

Rock & Roll: An American genre that began to develop in the 1950s, combining African-American and Anglo-American musical traditions. Mexican-Americans and other Latinos also played a major role in its development.

Latin Rock: While this label is sometimes used to describe Spanish/Portuguese-language rock music, it is usually understood to describe the combination of traditional Latin American folk styles with rock music that began to take place during the 1980s-90s.

JM: Student Activity

Before or after attending Jarabe Mexicano's performance, have students discuss music and culture. Have students create artwork about music and how it connects to culture. Lead a discussion about the types of music the students listen to. How does their preferred genre of music help form their identity? What can music tell us about ourselves, and others, and why is this important?



This study guide references the various musical, historical, and cultural aspects you'll find in a Jarabe Mexicano performances and as outlined in the **Visual and Performing Arts Content Standards for California Public Schools**. For a full version, please visit the California State Board of Education online at www.cde.ca.gov.

3.0 HISTORICAL AND CULTURAL CONTEXT

Understanding the Historical Contributions and Cultural Dimensions of Music

Students analyze the role of music in past and present cultures throughout the world, noting cultural diversity as it relates to music, musicians, and composers.

Role of Music

- 3.1 Analyze how the roles of musicians and composers have changed or remained the same throughout history.
- 3.2 Identify uses of music elements in non-traditional art music (e.g., atonal, twelve-tone, serial).
- 3.3 Compare and contrast the social function of a variety of music forms in various cultures and time periods.

Diversity of Music

- 3.4 Perform music from a variety of cultures and historical periods.
- 3.5 Compare and contrast instruments from a variety of cultures and historical periods.
- 3.6 Compare and contrast musical styles within various popular genres in North America and South America.
- 3.7 Analyze the stylistic features of a given musical work that define its aesthetic traditions and its historical or cultural context.
- 3.8 Compare and contrast musical genres or styles that show the influence of two or more cultural traditions.

4.0 AESTHETIC VALUING

Responding to, Analyzing, and Making Judgments About Works of Music

Students critically assess and derive meaning from works of music and the performance of musicians in a cultural context according to the elements of music, aesthetic qualities, and human responses.

Analyze and Critically Assess

- 4.1 Compare and contrast how a composer's intentions result in a work of music and how that music is used.

Derive Meaning

- 4.2 Analyze and explain how and why people in a particular culture use and respond to specific musical works from their own culture.
- 4.3 Compare and contrast the musical means used to create images or evoke feelings and emotions in works of music from various cultures.

JM: Concepts & Terms

Elements of Music Melody, harmony, rhythm, and form and the expressive elements of dynamics, tempo, and timbre (tone color).

Melodic and Rhythmic Form The organization and structure of a composition and the interrelationships of musical events within the overall structure.

Accompaniment Vocal or instrumental parts that accompany a melody.

Aerophone A musical instrument (as a trumpet or flute) in which sound is generated by a vibrating column of air.

Articulation The manner in which notes are performed, such as staccato (short) or legato (long).

Beat Unit of measure of rhythmic time.

Canon A musical form in which a melody is imitated exactly in one or more parts. Similar to a round.

Chord Three or more tones sounded simultaneously.

Chordophone An instrument the sound of which is created by means of strings stretched between two points.

Composition Creation of original music by organizing sound. Usually written for others to perform.

Compound Meter A type of meter in which the beat is divided into threes or sixes.

Diatonic Scale The notes found within a major or minor scale.

Dynamics Varying degrees of volume in the performance of music.

Embellishments Notes added to ornament a melody or rhythmic pattern.

Genre Type or kind of musical work (e.g., opera, jazz).

Harmonic Progression A succession of individual chords or harmonies that form larger units of phrases, sections, or compositions.

Harmony The simultaneous sounding of two or more tones.

Idiophone A musical instrument, the sound of which is produced by shaking or scraping.

Improvisation Spontaneous creation of music.

Interval The distance in pitch between two tones.

Major Key Tonally, a key based on a major scale; a scale that contains the following step pattern: whole, whole, half, whole, whole, whole, half; or uses the sol-fa tones of do, re, mi, fa, so, la, ti, do.

Melody An organized sequence of single notes.

Membranophone An instrument that produces sound through the vibrations of a membrane.

Meter The grouping of beats by which a piece of music is measured.

Minor Key Tonally, a key based on a minor scale; a scale that contains the following step pattern: whole, half, whole, whole, half, whole, whole; or uses the sol-fa tones of la, ti, do, re, me, fa, so, la.

Mixed Meter A mixture of duple and triple meters.

Notation Written music indicating pitch and rhythm for performance.

Ostinato A rhythmic or melodic accompaniment figure repeated continuously.

Pentatonic Scale A scale having five tones to the octave and containing no half steps: do, re, mi, so, la.

Phrase A musical idea comparable to a sentence or a clause in language.

Pitch The location of a note related to its highness or lowness.

Rhythm The combinations of long and short, even or uneven sounds that convey a sense of movement in time.

Scale The arrangement of notes in a specific order of whole and half steps.

Solfège A system of designating verbal syllables for the degrees of the scale.

Syncopation The placement of rhythmic accents on weak beats or weak portions of beats.

Tempo The pace at which music moves according to the speed of the underlying beat.

Texture The character of the different layers of horizontal and vertical sounds.

Theme and Variation A compositional form in which a theme is clearly stated and is followed by a number of variations.

Timbre Tone color or quality of sound heard.

Tonality (Key) The tonal center of a composition.

Triple Meter Beats grouped into a set of three.