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# BALLET FOLKLÓRICO DE LOS ÁNGELES



## ABOUT

**Ballet Folklórico de Los Ángeles (BFLA)** was founded in 2011 by Karel Montoya. Though young, the dance company has already distinguished itself as the nation's premier Mexican folk dance company. They have performed in world-class venues such as the Anaheim Convention Center, Orpheum Theater, Nokia Theater, Greek Theater, John Anson Ford Amphitheater, Santa Barbara Bowl, Valley Performing Arts Center and the Staples Center, among others.

The dance company has worked with Grammy-Award-Winning Artists such as Lila Downs, Pepe Aguilar, Mariachi Divas and Mariachi Los Camperos. BFLA has also been accompanied by Mariachi Nuevo Tecalitlan, world-famous Mariachi Vargas and Mariachi Garibaldi de Jaime Cuellar. Ballet Folklórico de Los Ángeles has shared the stage with bands celebrities such as Ana Barbara, Morrissey, Ruben (Cafe Tacuba), Las Cafeteras, Beatriz Adriana, Paquita la del Barrio, Empress Of, and Armenian pop star Lilit Hovhannisyan. This amazing dance troop was the first folklórico company in the country to accompany a Symphony; the San Bernardino Symphony Orchestra and the Marina del Rey Symphony orchestra, both conducted by Frank Fetta. In 2016, BFLA was featured in the cover of National Geographic Traveller UK.

2017 was a year full of surprises. BFLA collaborated with Mitu Network on a Mariachi Remake of Beauty and the Beast's "A Tale as Old as Time," featuring Mariachi Garibaldi de Jaime Cuellar and BFLA's Director, Karel Montoya. The video went viral on Facebook at 15 million views (and counting)!

They recently had the opportunity to work with Disney Studios on a magical performance in celebration of Pixar's new movie, "Coco," at the D23 Expo where they performed on stage with Benjamin Bratt, Grammy Award-Winning Mariachi Divas and the Grammy®-winning Gordon Goodwin Big Phat Band. They also performed at the Coco Premiere at El Capitan Theatre and on Dancing With the Stars, "Disney Night." BFLA started 2018 with a BANG, performing Coco's Academy Award-Winning song, "Remember Me," on the 90th Annual Academy Awards alongside Natalia Lafourcade, Gael Garcia Bernal and Miguel.

## ABOUT CONT.

### **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 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, Mocedades, Paquita del Barrio, Ana Barbara, Steeven Sandoval, Graciela Beltran, Maria Elena Beltran, Yolanda del Rio, Pablo Montero, Merecdes 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 Amphitheatre, 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. Most recently Garibaldi can be seen along side with Ballet Folklorico de Los Angeles in a recreation of Disney’s Beauty and the Beast’s “Tale As Old As Time” produced by Mitu Network. This video received over 15 million views.



## MATINEE PROGRAM

### **1. Nochebuena Intro into “El Caporal” and “La Madrugada”**

This music and dances are from the state of Jalisco.

*Choreographers:* Karel Montoya & Oscar Burciaga

### **2. Ruben Fuentes Potpourri**

Ruben Fuentes is one of the most praised composers of Mariachi Music. This medley is comprised of several of his most famous compositions.

### **3. Christmas Polkas**

Mariachi Polka renditions of some of our favorite Christmas Songs including, Jingle Bells and Sleight Ride.

These Polka style choreographies are inspired by the Polka Dances from the northern state of Chihuahua.

*Choreographers:* Jonathan Trejo and Karel Montoya

### **4. Instrument Presentation**

Mariachi director will introduce all the instruments in the mariachi. At the end of this presentation, one of the trumpet players will walk into the house and surprise the audience for the next number.

### **5. El Niño Perdido (The Lost Boy)**

Song from the State of Sinaloa

### **6. White Christmas in Las Olas and El Pasajero**

Songs from the coast of Jalisco. Choreographies inspired by Rafael Zamarripa.

*Choreographer:* Karel Montoya

### **7. Cielito Lindo Huasteco**

One of the most popular Mexican songs in three different styles.

### **8. El Cascabel**

Popular mariachi showpiece from the state of Veracruz

### **9. Disney Suite**

Mariachi renditions of our favorite Disney songs and movies.

“A Tale as Old as Time,” “Once Upon a Dream,” “Un Poco Loco,” “Remember Me,” “It’s a Small World” and end with “El Jarabe Tapatio.” (Mexican Hat Dance)

*Choreographer:* Oscar Burciaga

## 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.

## 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 ukulele. 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 continuo*”). The traditional mariachi has six to eight violins, two to three trumpets, one *vihuela*, one *guitar*, and one *guitarrón*.

**Source:** <https://www.teachervision.com/introduction-mariachi-music>



# MEXICAN FACTS AND CULTURE

## Fast Facts

- OFFICIAL NAME: United Mexican States
- FORM OF GOVERNMENT: Republic of federated states
- CAPITAL: Mexico City
- POPULATION: 120,286,655
- OFFICIAL 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.
- Mexicans take sports seriously. In ancient times, losers of a ritual ball game were once put to death. In some dangerous sports, like bullfighting and rodeo (which was invented in Mexico), competitors still put their lives on the line.

## Nature

- Few nations on Earth support as many plant and animal species as Mexico does. Located partway between the Equator and the Arctic Circle, it is a refuge for animals fleeing extreme cold in the north and intense heat in the south.
- In northern Mexico, deserts are full of plant and animal species that have found ways to survive the harsh environment. On Mexico's west coast, gray whales swim thousands of miles each year from Alaska to breed in the waters off Baja California.
- The rain forests and coastal wetlands of eastern Mexico are home to thousands of tropical plant species and elusive animals like jaguars and quetzal birds.

## LEARN MORE

**Note: please use discretion when accessing the videos and website links below. In an ever-evolving Digital Age, the “paid content” or preloaded “recommended” content included on many digital platforms may contain material that might not be appropriate for the classroom. The videos of our artists and lesson plan links have been vetted; however, we cannot assume responsibility for the content on the sites in which they appear (YouTube, Vimeo, etc.). Please review before sharing with students.**

**Folklorico Dance Tutorial:**

<https://folkloricocompany.com/blog/2016/6/23/tutorial-basic-steps-part-1>

**Folklorico Podcast:**

<https://folkloricocompany.com/blog/2016/4/14/our-first-podcast-talking-folklorico-episode-1>

**Mariachi Garibaldi Videos:**

<http://www.mariachi-garibaldi.com/videos/>

## THEATRE ETIQUETTE:

- 1.** Please be on time for the performance. Since transportation is not always predictable, plan to arrive at least 30 minutes prior to the performance.
- 2.** No eating or drinking in the performance halls. (Special arrangements can be made to eat a snack or lunch nearby)
- 3.** Please turn OFF (not vibrate or silence modes) all cell phones, electronic games, or any other devices that might make noise during the performance.
- 4.** Talk only before or after the performance. Remember that other audience members near you are trying to enjoy the performance as well. However, appropriate responses to the performance, such as laughing or applauding, are appreciated.
- 5.** Please act with maturity during romantic, violent, or other challenging moments that might arise during the performance.
- 6.** Please keep your feet on the floor and not on the seats around you.
- 7.** Personal hygiene (for example, combing hair, applying make-up, etc.) should be attended to in the restrooms.
- 8.** Please stay in your seat after the performance concludes until you are instructed to leave.
- 9.** Please exit the performance hall in an orderly fashion.
- 10.** MOST IMPORTANTLY: please open your eyes, ears, and mind to the entire theatrical experience!