

# **THE PROFESSIONAL MARIACHI**

## **By Jose Hernandez**

### **I. REHEARSALS**

- A. Be on time, at least 20 minutes before down-beat.
- B. Careful tuning is essential for a good rehearsal and performance. Needless playing is unfair to others who are trying to tune.
- C. If rehearsing with written music, place your music stand at best height for maintaining eye contact with the conductor.
- D. Stop playing when conductor stops, and listen to what he says.
- E. Do not rely on only reading music, try to memorize as fast as possible so that you can interpret your music better.
- F. When playing, listen to the entire Mariachi. All parts are important, especially the rhythm section.
- G. Keep track of time allowed for breaks, be back to play on schedule.
- H. NEVER stare or comment when someone makes a mistake. This is discourteous to the player and distracting for everyone. AND YOU COULD BE NEXT!
- I. Practice your parts at home. Plan your practice. Isolate problems in advance so you can concentrate on them.
- J. Prepare group choreography during rehearsals.
- K. Continuing your musical education in voice and instrument is very important for longevity as a good all around musician.

### **II. IMAGE AND HYGIENE**

- A. Clean boots, traje, botonadura, haircut, nails cut and clean and personal presentation.

- B. Remember we are striving to get rid of the image of the stereotypical pot-bellied Mariachi sitting under the cactus.

### **III. SHOWMANSHIP**

- A. When accompanying singer, do not over shadow the star.
- B. Once on stage do not practice parts, it looks unprofessional.
- C. Adjust attitude and facial expressions to type of song you are performing.
- D. Do not talk to person next to you on stage unless it's part of the act.
- E. Always keep in subtle touch with section leader, vocal cutoffs and director but **DO NOT IGNORE AUDIENCE.**
- F. When featured as a solo singer your arm movements and facial expressions need to compliment the lyrics of the song. Practice in front of a mirror until you feel comfortable.
- G. Choosing the right variety of songs and change of tempos are important for your choice of repertoire. **PLEASING THE AUDIENCE ALWAYS COMES FIRST.**
- H. Have fun, enjoy yourself during performance. **DO NOT GET UPTIGHT!**

### **IV. PROFESSIONAL CONDUCT**

- A. If you do not have something nice to say about your fellow musicians do not say anything at all. If you have problems with someone discuss it with your leader.
- B. Constructive criticism is one thing, putting people down is another.

- C. Always put your ego aside.
- D. When you appreciate the performance of another group let them know, congratulate them. This shows humility and true appreciation of Mariachi.
- E. Healthy competition is good motivation & results in better performance by all groups.
- F. Do not hesitate to ask if you can analyze a musical arrangement or assist in helping any fellow musician.
- G. Remember a professional musician can be creative and innovative, not always bound to the mechanics.