

The Mariachi Vocal Instrument

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Brief History of Mariachi Music

- Mariachi music originated in the region that encompasses the Mexican states of Jalisco, Michoacán, and Colima
- The precursor to the modern mariachi dates back to the late 19th century



Brief History of Mariachi Music

- With an increase in nationalism, mariachi music has catapulted to the forefront of popular culture as a vehicle to unite all regions of Mexico
- The music is featured in radio and film and taken abroad



Evolution of the Mariachi Ensemble

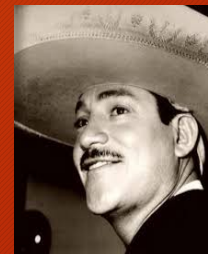
- Original configuration: Either *guitarrón* or harp as bass instrument, two violins, and *vihuela*
- By the 1950s, the mariachi as we know it today had been established: six violins, two trumpets, *guitarrón*, *vihuela*, and guitar.

**The flute is not part of the standard instrumentation of the mariachi.*



Early Ranchera Singers

- Lucha Reyes 🔊
- Lola Beltrán
- Amalia Mendoza
- José Alfredo Jiménez 🔊
- Jorge Negrete
- Pedro Infante
- Javier Solís 🔊
- Miguel Aceves Mejía 🔊



Important Things to Consider

- The Language: Studying the Spanish language is critical. The ability to correctly pronounce lyrics is important, but understanding the meaning of the lyrics is what will bring the music to life.

INTERPRETATION IS EVERYTHING!

- Public school language classes for the students—make the experience interdisciplinary
- Adult school language classes for instructors/older students
- Online language classes

Important Things to Consider

- The sociocultural significance of the music.
 - Folk music
 - Origins lie in lower class society
 - Themes vary from heartache, celebration of life, patriotism
 - Learn the nuances of the various musical genres that the mariachi plays

Mariachi Song Styles and Related Characteristics

- *Rancheras*
 - Can be in 2/4 (polka), 3/4 (valseada), 4/4 (lenta, romantica)
 - Simple melodies that often repeat or alternate between verse melody and refrain melody
 - Themes mostly lie in heartache
- *Sones*
 - Song form native to the mariachi
 - Alternates between 3/4 and 6/8
 - Syncopated rhythms
 - Verse melody, refrain melody

Mariachi Song Styles and Related Characteristics

- *Boleros*
 - Most subdued song type interpreted by the mariachi
 - Requires more vocal control
 - Many songs require the singer to build vocal intensity as song progresses
- *Huapangos*
 - Borrowed from the *Huasteca* region of Mexico (northeastern region of the country)
 - Falsetto singing is used for effect
 - Requires strength and control of both chest and head voices

Los Barandales del Puente

Los barandales del puente
Se estremecen cuándo paso
Morena mía, dame un abrazo

Dame tu mano, morena
Para subir al tranvía
Que está cayendo la nieve fría

Si está cayendo que caiga
Asómate a tu balcón
Dame un besito de corazón

De todas a ti te quiero
De las demás no hago caso
Chinita mía, dame un abrazo

Ya con esta me despido
Entre perfumes y azares
Aquí se acaban los barandales

Los Barandales del Puente

Canción Ranchera

Voice 1

Voice 2

8

1, 2, 3, 4, 5. 3. 6.

3

3

Los ba ran da les del puen te - sees tre me cen cuan ____ do

pa so mo re na mi a da meun a bra zo Ya con es

The musical score is written for two voices and piano accompaniment. It is in the key of F# (one sharp) and 3/4 time. The first system shows the vocal entries for Voice 1 and Voice 2. The lyrics are: "Los ba ran da les del puen te - sees tre me cen cuan ____ do". The second system continues the melody with piano accompaniment. The lyrics are: "pa so mo re na mi a da meun a bra zo Ya con es". The piano part includes a triplet of eighth notes and a repeat sign. The score is numbered 8 at the beginning of the second system.

Los Barandales del Puente

Canción Ranchera

17

ta me des pi do _____ en tre per fu mes ____ ya za res a qui sea

25

ca ban los ba ran da les _____

More to Consider

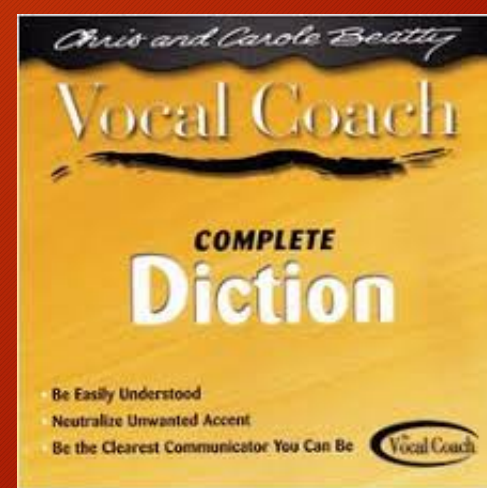
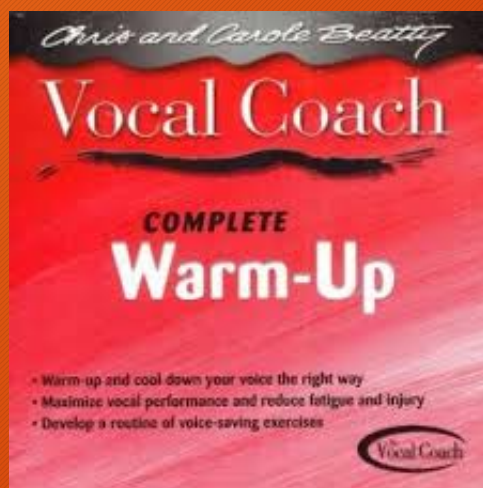
- Singing always requires use of the chest voice. The only time the head voice is used is for effect, primarily in singing *huapangos*. The head voice should not be regularly used, even when singing softer *boleros*.
- Not everyone will have the voice to interpret all types of songs. Play up the students' vocal strengths and carefully choose repertoire.
- Vocal exercises can help increase chest voice range.

More to Consider

- Always warm up before singing
- Do not overexert the voice attempting to sing something so intense
- Get out of your own way. Basic technique remains the same no matter what is being sung. The interpretation is what changes.

The Vocal Coach

- Excellent exercise series to warm up and expand vocal range
- Diction exercises



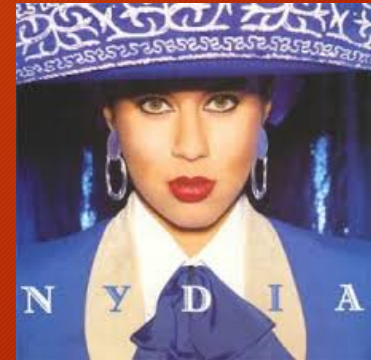
Examples

• Linda Ronstadt 

• Nydia Rojas 

• Mariachi Sol de México 

• Mariachi Reyna de Los Ángeles 





Questions and/or Comments