

*¡Canta Mariachi Canta!* by José Hernández



Does the prospect of teaching songs from the mariachi genre to your young singers make you feel uncomfortable? I had the opportunity to work with teachers in Las Vegas recently and we explored how to teach mariachi style to children by using the publication, *¡Canta, mariachi, canta!* recently-released by Hal Leonard Corporation. This new resource presents eight (8) traditional and well-known Mexican songs that are suitable for young voices. José Hernández and Marcia Neel collaborated to develop these user-friendly materials. All of the songs are arranged in keys that are child friendly, with vocal ranges that are accessible for both children and young adolescents.

The format of this resource provides teachers who are unfamiliar or uncomfortable with this style of music with tools and strategies to help their students successfully sing in the mariachi style. In addition to the songs themselves, the book delivers a short historical background about each of the them, along with a Spanish pronunciation guide for the lyrics. Maestro Hernandez's daughter, Crystal, sings the songs on the recordings in the correct style so the students can hear an age-appropriate model of the tone quality, musicality and Spanish text. The full score outlines parts for the vihuela, guitar, and soprano, alto and bass xylophone. One of the aspects that is most attractive is the easy access to digital downloads of audio MP3 files and singer PDF files of song sheets for the students. Educators can copy the printed material as often as they would like!

Educators can use these songs to teach musical concepts such as key signatures, triple and duple meter, rhythmic note values, pitch identification and pitch matching, vowel unification, text painting, dynamics, syllabic stress and word stress. The songs can also help teachers comply with individual state standards and the national core music standards: Performing, Responding and Connecting. If a teacher encourages the students to improvise or compose in the mariachi style, they can then include the standard Creating. ¡Muy bien!

Respectfully reviewed, Dr. Lynn Brinckmeyer

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