

MARIACHI HERENCIA DE MÉXICO
HEREDEROS



SCHOOL PERFORMANCE
A K-12 EDUCATIONAL PERFORMANCE EXPERIENCE

OVERVIEW



HEREDEROS: SCHOOL PERFORMANCE

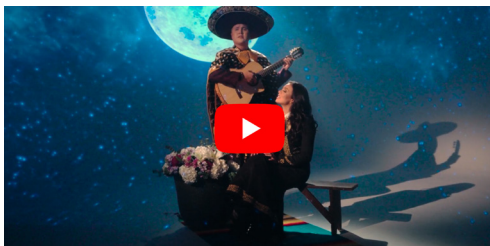
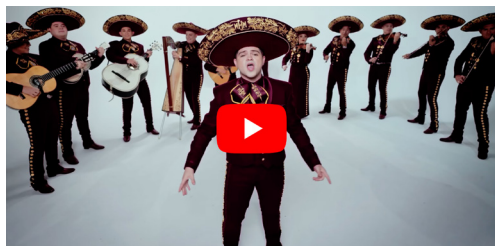
Latin GRAMMY-nominee **Mariachi Herencia de México** performs a 90-minute student show tailored to K-12 schools. *Herederos* is a lively concert experience that takes students on a musical journey through México, highlighting the importance of this rich, cultural tradition in music today.

ABOUT MARIACHI HERENCIA DE MÉXICO

The historic tradition of mariachi music has its roots of origin in cities such as Guadalajara and México City. As the ever-evolving genre's influence spread, it reached Chicago and birthed the **Mariachi Herencia de México**. The energetic, virtuosic Latin GRAMMY-nominated group has issued chart-topping albums and performed across the North American continent. *Nuestra Herencia*, their 2017 debut album, topped the Latin streaming charts. 2018's *Herencia de la Tierra Mía* was produced by celebrated industry veteran Javier Limón and charted atop all major streaming services. 2019's *Esencia* topped industry charts, while a second volume, issued in 2020 performed similarly. In 2022, *Herederos* appeared as the group were performing a wildly successful North American tour.

HOW IT BEGAN

The unlikely story started with an idea that came to Chicago resident **César Maldonado**. A product of **Chicago Public Schools (CPS)**, Mr. Maldonado founded the **Mariachi Heritage Foundation (MHF)** in 2013 with the goal of promoting mariachi music to new generations. In 2016, MHF began an all-city, audition-based music program for CPS students to receive advanced mariachi training. The most advanced students from the program were placed in an elite ensemble that later became **Mariachi Herencia de México**. The band recorded their first studio album in 2017 titled *Nuestra Herencia*, which later received a **Latin GRAMMY nomination** for **Best Ranchero/Mariachi Album**. Since then, **Mariachi Herencia de México** has released **five studio albums** and has **toured all over North America**. The band members are former CPS students, now attending college and thriving as professional mariachi artists.



ABOUT MARIACHI

Mariachi music is made to move you! It is designed to express emotion and to move the listener. Joyful, sad, proud, angry, lonely, romantic, and dramatic—all these feelings and more can be found in the soul of mariachi.

DEFINING MARIACHI

Since the days of the Chicano Movement beginning in the 1960s, mariachi has become a movement of its own throughout the U.S., attracting millions of fans and music makers across the country.



THE HISTORY OF MARIACHI

The music that was called mariachi as early as the 1850s emerged from the ranches and small towns of western México, particularly in the states of Jalisco, Michoacán, Nayarit, Colima, and Aguascalientes. When the Spanish invaded México the traditional instruments gave way to instruments imported by the Spanish: violins, guitars and harps, brass horns, and woodwinds. The Indian and mestizo (of mixed race) musicians not only learned to play European instruments, but also to build their own, sometimes giving them shapes and tunings of their own invention to create a style of their own. Although the roots of mariachi go back hundreds of years, there are few well known musicians from its early history because mariachi music was the music of country people. Until the early 1930's mariachi groups were local and semi-professional. They were almost entirely unknown outside their own region.

MARIACHI MUSIC IN THE UNITED STATES (and beyond)

When the Spanish invaded México new instruments were imported: violins, guitars, harps, and trumpets. The Indian and mestizo (of mixed race) musicians not only learned to play European instruments, but also to build their own, sometimes giving them shapes and tunings of their own invention to create a style of their own. Mexican musicians soon developed their own instruments, made in their own style, called the vihuela mexicana and the guitarrón. These two instruments continue to be the core elements of the mariachi sound. The U.S. is home to many musicians and mariachi music is just as likely to be performed in major concert halls by concert groups as it is at birthdayparties, wedding receptions, baptism celebrations, and restaurants.

PRESERVING HERITAGE

According to the U.S. Census, there are over 54 million Latinos in the U.S. today and Latinos represent nearly a third of Chicago's total population of 2.7 million residents. Maldonado hopes that through the integration of mariachi into the schools' curriculums, it will help the students form a connection to their roots and thus increase their pride and self-esteem. The preservation of cultural traditions through the arts is critical both for Latino students and those who want to learn more about the traditions of their neighbors and friends.

MARIACHI INSTRUMENTS

A traditional mariachi band has as many as **four to seven violins**, **two to three trumpets**, a **harp**, and a **guitar**—all standard **European instruments** that students might already be familiar with. The **vihuela** (small guitar) and **guitarrón** (big bass guitar) make up the rest of the mariachi instrumentation. These instruments are **unique to the mariachi ensemble**.

GUITARRÓN



A deep-voiced guitar called the **guitarrón** serves as the bass of the ensemble. While these instruments have European origins, in their present form they are strictly Mexican.

VIHUELA



The high-pitched, round-backed guitar is called the **vihuela**. When strummed in the traditional manner this gives mariachi its typical rhythmic vitality.”

GUITAR



The **guitar** in mariachi is essential in creating the dynamic and upbeat sound that is at the heart of mariachi music. The guitar’s percussive strumming and bright sound add energy to mariachi music, while it’s ability to play both chords and single-note Melodie’s allows for a diverse range of musical expression.

HARP



The **harp** in mariachi music adds a rich and complex layer of sound to the ensemble, with its delicate and airy qualities complementing the strong, rhythmic strumming of the guitar.

VIOLIN



The **violin** is one of the oldest string instruments, with roots in medieval Europe. In mariachi music, the violin contributes to the rich and emotional sound of the music by providing beautiful and intricate melodies.

TRUMPET



The **trumpet** is a brass instrument essential in mariachi music. Its bright and piercing sound adds a lively and upbeat feel to the music, and often plays the lead melody in mariachi songs.

AFTER THE PERFORMANCE

CONSIDER THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS AND DISCUSS AS A CLASS OR IN SMALL GROUPS

1. Which song was your favorite and why?
2. Do you remember any of the rhythms that were played during the show? Can you recreate them?
3. Do you remember the different instruments used? How did each instrument sound? How did their unique sounds contribute to the overall feeling of the piece?
4. What did you notice about the clothing worn by the performers?
5. Did the performance remind you of anything you have seen, heard or experienced before? If so, how?
6. The mariachi performance was bilingual, as some of it was presented in English and some of it was presented in Spanish. Do you or someone in your family speak more than one language?

CREATE AN ALBUM COVER

Ask students to imagine that **Mariachi Herencia de México** wants to invite them to help design their new album cover. First, ask students to consider what elements are included and choices are being made in their last three albums covers.

Share the Design Criteria: They want the new album cover to celebrate the music and culture of mariachi and Mexican American identity. Ask students to identify several important ideas and images that come to mind when they think about the concert and what they learned. Ask students to sketch a few design ideas on scratch paper. When they have settled on a final design, have them create their final rendition! Provide opportunity for peer response and ask students to consider their answer to the following:

- What elements did you include in your design and why?
- Are there other elements that you considered but did not use?
- Why did you use the colors you chose?
- Why should the group choose your design?
- What does your design tell a people about the musician's music or culture?



CONNECTING TO MUSIC

OBJECTIVE

To research an element of mariachi music or culture.

OPTION 1: MEET THE INSTRUMENT

Students will break into groups and research one of the instruments played by mariachi groups and report their findings to the class. Assign each small group a different instrument from the list and invite them to research.

OPTION 2: MEET THE MUSICIAN

Student will research one of the artists **Mariachi Herencia de México** pays homage to on the *Herederos* album, including Juan Gabriel, Rocío Dúrcal, Frank Sinatra, Héctor Lavoe, Cuco Sánchez, among other artists and composers.

PRESENTING RESEARCH

Students may present their research to the class. Have students report their findings in a format of their choice (google slideshow or essay). If students found audio clips of their instrument being played or music of the selected artists allow them to share with the class as part of their report.



Juan Gabriel
Singer & Composer



Rocío Dúrcal
Singer



Frank Sinatra
Singer



Héctor Lavoe
Singer



Cuco Sánchez
Singer & Composer

CONNECTING TO LANGUAGE ARTS



OBJECTIVE

Using the album *Herederos* by **Mariachi Herencia de México** as inspiration, students will write their own lyrics to a song or poem about their neighborhood, tierra, or place in the world.

ACTIVITY

Part of the mariachi tradition is in telling stories from life. Stories can be about love, or lost love, about a hometown, about nature, or about missing some place or someone. Have students consider where they find “home.” Is it the place that they currently live with their family or a place far away? Is “home” a neighborhood, a city, a country or a place that only happens when certain people gather together?

Have students complete a 5 minute free-writing using their 5 senses. What does home (however they choose to define it) feel like, taste like, smell like, look like, and sound like?

After free-writing, have them begin to consider what from their list would make good additions for their song or poem.

They might find it useful to use a format of repeating:

My home feels like . . .
My home looks like . . . etc.

More experienced writers may choose to find a format that works for them.

Share with the class or in small groups or hold a performance of their work about home.

CONNECTING TO SELF

Members of **Mariachi Herencia de México** live in Chicago and many members of the group have Mexican heritage. Heritage means a tradition or something that is passed down from one generation to another. Mariachi music is a tradition that is passed down from generation to generation.

OBJECTIVE

Students consider a traditional practice in their family or community and create a short explanation of the tradition's origin and how it is practiced in their experience.

Note: There is a challenge inherent in celebrating heritage between honoring tradition and embracing differences in the ways students connect to the various facets of their identities. Giving students space to share about their personal, familial, religious, ethnic, geographic or cultural heritage celebrates where each of us come from as individuals but also how we contribute to the classroom, school and communities of which we are a part. It's important to provide multiple contexts for students to engage. If individuals aren't as excited about connecting with their familial heritage, a community or school culture might be an easier entry into the topic!

ACTIVITY

Students Discussion: We all have traditions in our families or communities. Sometimes families might eat a certain kind of food together every year to celebrate a holiday. Other communities might come together to dance or sing. Everything from the kind of music your family plays to certain clothing that you wear, to a language you speak might be part of your heritage. What examples do you have in your life that may be part of your tradition or your heritage?

Give students time to jot down and brainstorm some possibilities. Discuss in small groups for feedback and narrow down their list to one or two ideas.

- Interview a family or community member about how a tradition was started or how it was changed through the years.
- Try to imagine explaining the tradition to someone who has never heard of it before. What details might feel familiar and ordinary to you but might be interesting to others? Try to tell the story of celebrating the tradition from beginning to end—including all the details you can remember.
- Look up the history of the tradition on www.kiddle.co. Remind students that the more specific you can be the better! For example, looking up “History of Easter Egg Hunt” gets better results than “Easter” or “Easter Egg Hunt.”

Compile research results into a google slide, one for each student, or have each student create a poster about their heritage practice that can be displayed or compiled into a class book.



RESOURCES AND SOURCES

WEBSITES

Official Website

<https://www.mariachiherenciademexico.com/>

Official Youtube Channel

<https://www.youtube.com/@MariachiHerenciaMex>

Herederos CD

<https://lnk.to/Herederos>

BOOKS

Mariachi by Patricia Greathouse

<https://www.amazon.com/Mariachi-Patricia-Greathouse/dp/1423602811>

Canta, Mariachi, Canta by Jose Hernandez

<https://www.amazon.com/Canta-mariachi-canta-Traditional.../dp/1495062406>

Mariachi Music In America by Daniel Sheehy

<https://www.amazon.com/Mariachi-Music-America-Experiencing-Expressing/dp/0195141466>

The Mariachi by Elena Castro, Barbara M. Flores, Eddie Hernández

https://www.leeandlow.com/books/the-mariachi/teachers_guide

MOVIES

Coco

Book of Life

