

1  **The History of Mariachi y La Cancion Ranchera**

Mas Que Cien Anos de Musica

By

Bob Diaz

Music, Dance, Theater Arts and Africana Studies Librarian

The University of Arizona Library

2  **Mariachi defined..**

Mariachi

(1) A specific type of Mexican musical group or ensemble usually consisting of several violins, one to two trumpeters, a guitarron player, several guitarrists, and sometimes the harp. (2) An individual musician in a mariachi group (synonym: mariachero). (3) adjective denoting a genre or style related to the mariachi e.g. mariachi music, mariachi trumpet. Since the 30s, the mariachi has been widely considered the quintessential Mexican folk derived musical ensemble, and has become an institution symbolic of Mexican music and culture. Mariachi groups are currently found throughout the Americas and Europe. From the Latino Encyclopedia. Entry on mariachi written by Jonathan Clark.

3  **Origins of the word Mariachi**



- The word mariachi is indigenous to Mexico. It is derived from the now extinct Coca language on central Jalisco.



- "As reported in a document by Justiniano Figueroa Escribano of Cocula dated 1835, by the year 1695 the term "mariachi already exists. " The source documents for this have been tested scientifically for authenticity. Efrain De La Cruz G. "The Origin of the Mariachi of Cocula".



- First written reference to, and origins of the word mariachis have long been disputed. However, recent scholarship proves that mariachi did not emerge from the French term for marriage, as the following documentation describes:



4  **Origins of the word Mariachi**

- 1852: A priest named Cosme Santa Ana writes to his superiors complaining about mariachis playing loud rowdy music during fandangos taking place during Holy Week. He goes as far as to take away the musicians instruments and run them off, only to find that the mayor hires more musicians to allow the fandango to continue. The enraged priest resigns his post shortly thereafter.

- 1859: Another priest writes in his diary about another episode in which mariachi music is mentioned. Comprised of harp, violins and bass drum.

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#### 5 **Mariachis beginnings**

- Pre-Columbian Mexico had its own musical traditions. In some groups, musicianship was a professional vocation that required precision and mastery.
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- The Spanish brought trained musicians and stringed instruments to Mexico and the Church offered formal European musical training to the local populations.
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- Mariachi emerged through a hybridization process of indigenous, Spanish and African musical cultures. Regional variation occurred.
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- Cocula is said to be the birthplace of the mariachi, although the people of Tecalitlan would disagree... Mariachi is native to the states of Jalisco, Nayarit, Guanajuato, Michoacan, Zacatecas, Aguascalientes, and Colima.
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#### 6 **Mariachis beginnings**

- "(Mariachi)...the music had a grass roots beginning. It started as a lower-class music with rag-tag bands playing with whatever instruments they could until about the 1920's, when mariachi music grew as part of a cultural and political movement in Mexico". – Mike Osegueda, "Music with a Past/Mariachi: This singularly form of expression has staying power. The Fresno Bee, March 21, 2003.

#### 7 **Pre-1900s**

- 1827-1830: The vihuela is invented in the Ascencion district of Cocula. The instrument later led to the creation of the guitarron.
- Also at this time there are reports in Cocula of the existence of the Mariachi Coculan and the Mariachi of El Chivatillo, which gave way to the Mariachi Salinas.
- These groups were composed of one or two violins, a vihuela, a guitarron, and the chirimia. –De La Cruz.

#### 8 **Pre-1900s**

- By the mid-1800's, there existed lots of string bands, called "Conjuntos de Arpa" throughout the western states of Mexico, especially Jalisco and Michoacan. According to Silvestre Vargas, Placido Rebolledo led a mariachi in Tecalitlan in 1840 that was comprised of violin, harp, and guitarra de golpe.
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#### 9 **Pre-1900s**

- 1880: Gaspar Vargas, founder of Mariachi Vargas de Tecalitlan is born.
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- 1890: Cirilo Marmolejo, leader of Mariachi Coculense born on July 9, 1890.
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- 1896: The Mariachi de Jose Garcia, from Cocula, visits Mexico City. This is the first

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- 1896: The Mariachi de Jose Garcia, from Cocula, visits Mexico City. This is the first mariachi to be known in the country's capital.

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- 1897/1898: Mariachi Vargas formed in Tecalitlan, Jalisco by Gaspar Vargas.
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10  **Mariachi Vargas**

11  **Pre-Revolution (1900 to 1910)**

- 1903: The Mariachi de Cirilo Marmolejo (from Tecolotlan) introduces charro garb in the musical group.
- 1905: Mariachi Cuarteto Coclense, led by Justo Villa, plays in Mexico City for the first time for Porfirio Diaz on the occasion of his birthday.
- May 23, 1906: Lucha Reyes, Mexico's first female ranchera star, is born in Guadalajara Jalisco.

12  **Pre-Revolution (1900-1910)**

- "One version of mariachi history tells how, in 1907, Mexico's last dictator, General Porfirio Diaz, organized a garden party for a visiting US Secretary of State. Since he wanted to include Mexican music, a quartet from Jalisco were contracted—and told to change their white cotton trousers for the charro suits worn by the men who owned the haciendas where they worked as servants. A quartet, even in their fancy dress, still seemed too poor for the occasion, so eight musicians and two dancers were contracted. The Jaliscan son was never the same again, and mariachi, along with its costume, was born". World music the Rough Guide, vol. 2: Latin and North America, Caribbean, India, Asia and the Pacific.

13  **Pre-Revolution (1900-1910)**

- 1908:
- Mariachi Cuarteto Coclense is one of the first mariachi if not the first, to record. In Mexico City, three American record companies record this group and its various sones, jarabes, and huapangos.
- Jose Marmolejo is born in Tecolotlan, Jalisco. Leader of Mariachi Tapatio. Nephew of Cirilo Marmolejo.

14  **Revolutionary Period (1910-1920)**

- November 30, 1911: Jorge Negrete is born in Guanajuato, Guanajuato, Mexico.
- November 15, 1915. Miguel Aceves Mejia born . (R. Burr notes he was born on November 13, 1917).
- December 24, 1916: Lalo Guerrero born in Tucson Az. Author of La Cancion Mexicana, first recorded by Lucha Reyes.

15  **Revolutionary period (1910-1920)**

- November 18, 1917: Pedro Infante is born in Mazatlan, Sinaloa, Mexico.
- May 17, 1919: Antonio Aguilar born in Villanueva Zacatecas, Mexico.
- The first arrangement of El Jarabe Tapatio was published. Known as "El Jarabe Nacional".

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#### 16 **Impact of the Revolution**

- The Revolution spurs urbanization and a sense of mestizo nationalism which helps promote mariachi music as a native Mexican music.
- “It was by all accounts, the Revolution that brought mariachi music from the small rural towns of Jalisco (and the surrounding states of Nayarit, southern Sinaloa, Colima and southern Michoacan) to national, and even international prominence. The Revolution provided a tremendous impetus towards interest in “popular culture” in Mexico, and one consequence of this was the arrival in Mexico City of the Mariachi Coculense of Cirilo Marmolejo in 1920”. Jonathan Clark 1993, liner notes to Mariachi Coculense de Cirilo Marmolejo.

#### 17 **Mariachi Music as a national symbol**

- “Although musicians had performed for official functions under Porfirio Diaz in 1905 and 1907, it was not until after the Revolution of 1910 that the mariachi became widely adopted as a symbol of nationalism. Since Alvaro Obregon’s administration (1920-1924) post-revolutionary Mexican presidents have used mariachi music for political events, with Lazaro Cardenas being the first to officially subsidize it during his term (1934-1940). Jonathan Clark, “Mariachi” in the Latino Encyclopedia.

#### 18 **1920s**

- May 3, 1921: Cuco Sanchez born in Altamira Tamaulipas.
- 1921: Silvestre Vargas joins his father’s mariachi group as a violinist.
- July 23, 1923: Amalia Mendoza is born in San Juan Huetamo, Michoacan.
- 1923: The bar El Tenampa opens and gains popularity as host to two mariachis from Jalisco, those of Cirilo Marmolejo and Concho Andrade. It was at this point that the tradition of gatherings of mariachis in the Plaza Garibaldi looking for work began.

#### 19 **1920s**

- Jose Alfredo Jimenez is born on January 19, 1926 in Dolores Hidalgo, Guanajuato, Mexico.
- 1928: All the musical groups begin to imitate the charro garb introduced by Cirilo Marmolejo.
- July 25, 1928: Tomas Mendez is born in Fresnillo, Zacatecas, Mexico.
- 1929: Pepe Dominguez writes the standard mariachi tune, Aires del Mayab, a challenging song that only the best singers can master.

#### 20 **1930s**

- Mariachis begin to appear in the movies and are heard on the radio. By the end of the decade, trumpet is added to the list of instruments used in the mariachi ensemble when Emilio Azcarraga Viaurreta, founder of Mexico City radio station XEW, insists on it because the strings sound too thin for the radios of that time.

#### 21 **1930s**

- 1930: Radio XEW is founded by Emilio Acarraga Vidaurreta.
- September 1, 1931: Javier Solis is born, Gabriel Siria Levario in Mexico City, Mexico.

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- 1930: Radio XEW is founded by Emilio Acarraga Vidaurreta.
- September 1, 1931: Javier Solis is born, Gabriel Siria Levario in Mexico City, Mexico.
- 1931: Mariachi Coculense appears in the film, "Santa".
- 1931: Peerless Records is founded by Don Eduardo C. Baptista. This label was to become home to Pedro Infante and later, Lola Beltran
- 1931: Mariachi Vargas plays in Tijuana Mexico, the furthest the group has ever ventured.

22  **1930s**

- Lola Beltran, La Reina de La Cancion Ranchera, is born on March 7, 1932 in Rosario, Sinaloa, Mexico.
- 1932: Silvestre Vargas takes over managing his father Gaspar's mariachi ensemble.
- 1933: Nati Cano is born in Ahuiscolco, Jalisco
- 1933: Mariachi Coculense plays at the World's Fair in Chicago, the first time any mariachi had ever played outside of Mexico.

23  **1930s**

- 1934: Mariachi Vargas performs for the inauguration of Lazaro Cardenas. Vargas decides to stay in Mexico City.
- November 30, 1934: Lucha Villa, La Voz Ronca de Chihuahua, and one of Mexico's most beloved entertainers, is born in Camargo, Chihuahua, Mexico.
- 1935: RCA "Victor Talking Recording Company" sets up a record factory in Mexico City. It begins pressing records on August 28, 1935.

24  **1930s**

- 1936: Alla en el Rancho Grande, a movie featuring Tito Guizar, launches the singing charro phenomenon and the golden age of Mexican cinema in Mexico.
- 1937: Pepe Guizar writes the song, "Guadalajara" which is recorded by Lucha Reyes and later Demetrio Gonzalez.
- 1937: Jose Marmolejo's group, Mariachi Tapatio, appears in the films Las Cuatro Milpas and Jalisco Nunca Pierde".
- Jose Alfredo Jimenez writes his first song, "El Jinete" at the age of 11!

25  **Mariachi Tapatio**

26  **1930s**

- 1937: Mariachi Vargas appears in the film "Asi Es Mi Tierra" the first of over 200 films in which they appeared over time, and they cut their first recordings.
- 1938: La Tierra del Mariachi, a film, that includes mariachi musicians premieres.
- 1939: The film Con Los Dorados de Villa, also includes appearances by mariachis.

27  **1940s**

- February 17, 1940: Vicente Fernandez born in Huentitan el Alto, Jalisco.
- 1941: Miguel Martinez becomes Mariachi Vargas's first permanent trumpeter.
- October 4, 1944: Rocio Durcal is born in Spain.

28  **1940s**

- June 24, 1944: Lucha Reyes dies. Suicide/poisoning? She was the first female ranchera singer and she helped popularize la cancion ranchera. Her songs included La Panchita,

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- June 24, 1944: Lucha Reyes dies. Suicide/poisoning? She was the first female ranchera singer and she helped popularize la cancion ranchera. Her songs included La Panchita, La Adelita and other classics.
- Ruben Fuentes, a violinist, joins Mariachi Vargas, and soon becomes its musical director.
- July 15, 1946: Linda Ronstadt is born in Tucson, Az.
- 1949: Pedro Infante launches the popularity of el bolero ranchero with the recording of the song, "Amorcito Corazon".

29  **Lucha Reyes**

30  **1950s**

- Lola, Miguel Aceves Mejia, Jose Alfredo, Javier Solis, Amalia Mendoza are all in their prime. Mariachi Vargas reigns supreme, as the popularity of Mariachi Tapatio begins to wane. Pedro Infante and Jorge Negrete die, but are on top until their untimely deaths.
- Movie classics made during this time included appearances by Lola Beltran and Jose Alfredo Jimenez (Camino de Guanajuato), as well as Miguel Aceves Mejia (Bajo El Cielo de Mexico), Luis Aguilar, Antonio Aguilar, Demetrio Gonzalez, and others.
- Mariachi Mexico de Pepe Villa popularizes the use of two trumpeters in its mariachi ensemble and becomes a popular backup group.

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31  **1950s**

- January 7, 1950: Juan Gabriel is born in Paracuaro, Michoacan. Real name: Alberto Aguilera Valadez.
- 1950: Javier Solis records his first song for CBS.
- 1950: Mariachi Tapatio takes part in the earliest television transmissions from Mexico.
- 1951: Jose Alfredo Jimenez publishes the first batch of many songs published in the 50s, including Ella, Cuando El Destino and Cuatro Caminos.
- 1952: Pedro Infante and Jorge Negrete appear together in Dos Tipos De Cuidado, the only film in which both actors appear in the same scenes together.

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32  **1950s**

- December 5, 1953: Jorge Negrete dies.
- April 15, 1957: Pedro Infante dies after the plane he was co-piloting crashes in Merida Yucatan, Mexico.
- 1957: Cuco Sanchez publishes various songs, including "Arrieros Somos" "La Cama de Piedra" and "Te Parto El Alma".
- Ana Gabriel is born on December 10, 1958 in Guamuchil, Sinaloa, Mexico.
- 1958: Jose Marmolejo dies.

33  **Jorge Negrete**

34  **Pedro Infante**

35  **1960s**

Lola on top. Appears in several feature films including Mexico de Mi Corazon, and

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- Lola on top. Appears in several feature films including Mexico de Mi Corazon, and Cucurrucucu Paloma.
- Lucha Villa begins to record in early 60's and appears in movies like El Mariachi Canta, El Gallo de Oro, Mexico de Mi Corazon and Me Canse de Rogarle, among others.
- Antonio Aguilar records dozens of albums and is the star of just as many films.
- Vargas still reigns supreme
- Irma Serrano, Flor Silvestre, Lucha Moreno, Maria De Lourdes, Dora Maria and others are all top notch singers who are popular in this period.

36  **1960s**

- 1960: Cirilo Marmolejo dies in Mexico City at the age of 70.
- 1961-62: UCLA Institute for Ethnomusicology starts a mariachi class.
- 1962: Jose Alfredo Jimenez releases the classic album, "La Enorme Distancia". Backup group is Mariachi Vargas de Tecalitlan. :
- 1962: Guadalupe Pineda born in Guadalajara Mexico.

37  **Jose Alfredo Jimenez**

38  **1960s**

- 1963: Los Camperos de Nati Cano formed in Tijuana Mexico.
- September 24, 1963: Aida Cuevas born
- 1964: Los Changuitos Feos founded in Tucson.
- Lucha Villa appears in the classic film, El Gallo De Oro.
- April 19, 1966: Javier Solis dies.
- 1966: Vicente Fernandez signs his first record contract with CBS, Mexico.
- 1966: Belle Ortiz starts a mariachi program in the San Antonio Independent School District.

39  **Lucha Villa**

40  **Javier Solis**

41  **1960s**

- August 7, 1968: Pepe Aguilar born in San Antonio, Texas.
- September 28, 1969: Pedro Fernandez is born.
- August 29, 1969: Lucero born in Mexico City, Mexico.
- 1969: Nati Cano opens his famed restaurant, La Fonda in Los Angeles.
- 1969: Gaspar Vargas, founder of Mariachi Vargas de Tecalitlan, dies.

42  **1970s**

- "During the Chicano Movement of the 70's, Mexican Americans latched onto mariachi music as something that represented their history". – Osegueda.
- 1970: Mariachi class offered in San Antonio high school. (NYT 4/24/05)
- 1971: Mariachi Cobre formed in Tucson Arizona by Randy Carrillo and others, former members of Los Changuitos Feos.
- April 24, 1971: Alejandro Fernandez born in Mexico City.
- October 2, 1972: Angeles Ochoa born in Tijuana, Mexico.

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- October 2, 1972: Angeles Ochoa born in Tijuana, Mexico.
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43  **Mariachi Cobre**

44  **1970s**

- 1972: Vicente Fernandez releases the album, "Arriba Huentitan", which includes the song, "Volver, Volver".
- November 23, 1973: Jose Alfredo Jimenez dies.
- 1974: Juan Gabriel releases the album, "Juan Gabriel Con El Mariachi Vargas de Tecalitlan, that contains the song "Se Me Olvido Otra Vez".
- 1979: First mariachi festival in US held in San Antonio Texas, organized by Belle and Juan Ortiz.

45  **Vicente Fernandez**

46  **Juan Gabriel**

47  **1980s**

- 1980: Rocio Durcal releases her first ranchera album, which includes her biggest hit, Amor Eterno, written by Juan Gabriel.
- 1981: Mariachi Sol de Mexico founded by Jose A. Hernandez. This group pushes the envelope with its renditions of American songs like New York, New York.
- April 10, 1983: The first Tucson International Mariachi Conference 's concert sells out and features Lola Beltran and Mariachi Vargas de Tecalitlan.

48  **1980s**

- 1987: Linda Ronstadt releases her first all Mexican album entitled, "Canciones de Mi Padre".
- 1988: Linda Ronstadt wins grammy for Canciones de Mi Padre.
- In 1989, Nati Cano receives the National Heritage Fellowship of the National Endowment for the Arts, the United States government's highest honor in traditional arts
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49  **Linda Ronstadt**

50  **1990s**

- 1991: Linda Ronstadt releases her second mariachi album, Mas Canciones.
- 1991: Juan Gabriel wins lifetime achievement award at the Billboard/Univision Latin Music Awards.
- 1992: Alejandro Fernandez and Pepe Aguilar both release their first mariachi recordings.
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51  **Alejandro Fernandez**

52  **Pepe Aguilar**

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52  **Pepe Aguilar**

53  **1990s**

- 1993: Mariachi Reyna de Los Angeles formed. Very popular American all female mariachi. Formed by Jose Hernandez and Laura Sobrino.
- 1995: Juan Gabriel releases "El Mexico Que Se Nos Fue", one of his best works.
- July 15, 1995: Tomas Mendez dies. Author of Cucurucucu Paloma, Gorrioncillo Pecho Amarillo and other tunes popularized by Lola Beltran.
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54  **Mariachi Reyna De Los Angeles**

55  **1990s**

- 1996: Nydia Rojas, former vocalist with Mariachi Reyna de Los Angeles, releases her debut album, "Nydia Rojas".
- March 24, 1996. Lola Beltran dies.
- 1997: Maria de Lourdes dies.

56  **Lola Beltran**

57  **1990s**

- 1997: Mariachi Vargas launches year long celebration of its 100th anniversary.
- Juan Gabriel and Rocio Durcal release the 2 cd set, Juntos Otra Vez, that features some of Gabriel's best writing.
- 1998: Vicente Fernandez is inducted into the Billboard Latin Music Hall of Fame
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58  **Juntos Otra Vez / Juan Gabriel y Rocio Durcal**

59  **2000s**

- October 6, 2000: Cuco Sanchez dies.
- June 11, 2001: Amalia Mendoza dies.
- 2004: Rocio Durcal releases "Alma Ranchera" featuring songs by Cuco Sanchez and Jose Alfredo Jimenez.

60  **Rocio Durcal Alma Ranchera**

61  **2000s**

- 2005: Article in the New York Times: (Sousa? Many Students March to Mariachi Instead", by Patricia Leigh Brown, Sunday, April 24, 2005)
- "Across the country, more than 500 public schools now offer mariachi as part of the curriculum, said Daniel Sheehy, a mariachi expert and director of Smithsonian Folkways Recordings in Washington, D.C."
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"A lot of Mexican-born parents and first and second generation parents enjoy seeing

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- "A lot of Mexican-born parents and first and second generation parents enjoy seeing their children playing in a mariachi group. + I think it gives them a lot of satisfaction to see their kids be proud of their culture and their background. It's real admirable that a lot of people of Mexican descent are able to preserve their roots through mariachi music". Jonathan Clark in Osegueda.

63  **2000s**

- 2006:Llegaron Los Camperos by Nati Cano y Mariachi Los Camperos is nominated for a Grammy
- March 25, 2006: Rocio Durcal dies of cancer.
- November 6, 2006: Miguel Aceves Mejia dies.
- 2006: Daniel Sheehy publishes the book, "Mariachi Music in America: Experiencing Music, Expressing Culture".
- 2007: April: 25th Anniversary of Tucson International Mariachi Conference.
- June 19, 2007: Antonio Aguilar dies on June 19, 2007.

64  **Here and Now**

- Here in Tucson in the past month and coming up:
- Viva Arizona workshops and concert in August held at the UA School of Music.
- Ana Gabriel at AVA / Casino Del Sol in August.
- Harmonia Fiesta Concert Fundraiser for Cathedral: Mariachi Cobre, Aida Cuevas, Vicki Carr, various school mariachis, including the one from Davis Elementary. Several high school mariachi groups, and two baile folklorico groups.

65  **Here and Now**

- Sept. 13: Alejandro Fernandez in concert: Last night.
- Sept. 15: Saturday: Mariachi USA festival.
- October 17: Pepe Aguilar
- Mariachis can be practically any day of the week in various restaurants throughout the region: La Fuente, La Parrilla Suiza, El Mariachi restaurant, Casino del Sol.
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66  **Here and Now**

- Chandler Mariachi Festival last weekend.
- International Mariachi Conference in Guadalajara Mexico was just held and ends on 9/14. It featured performances by the top mariachi groups in the world as well as top singers like Lila Downs, Lucero and Guadalupe Pineda.
- 9/15-9/16: Annual Las Vegas Mariachi concert this weekend.
- 9/23 – 9/30: San Jose International Mariachi Festival
- Other conferences/festivals in Denver and Las Cruces coming up.

67  **Conclusion**

- "(Mariachi) It doesn't die. One curious thing is that it circumvents the media channels. Its existence is independent of the media. I believe that from this day on, if no media channel ever played a mariachi record and the stopped selling records, it wouldn't die.

Its existence is independent of the media. I believe that from this day on, if no media channel ever played a mariachi record and the stopped selling records, it wouldn't die. Because it would still be performed. People would still ask for those songs because it fulfills a cultural role, a cultural need. That's what keeps it alive." Jonathan Clark. – Osequeda article.