



# ONSTAGE STUDENT FIELD TRIP RESOURCE GUIDE



Mariachi  
Rock  
Revolution



## ABOUT OVERTURE CENTER FOR THE ARTS

Overture Center for the Arts fills a city block in downtown Madison with world-class venues for the performing and visual arts. Made possible by an extraordinary gift from Madison businessman W. Jerome Frautschi, the center presents the highest-quality arts and entertainment programming in a wide variety of disciplines for diverse audiences. Offerings include performances by acclaimed classical, jazz, pop, and folk performers; touring Broadway musicals; quality children's entertainment; and world-class ballet, modern and jazz dance. Overture Center's extensive outreach and educational programs serve thousands of Madison-area residents annually, including youth, older adults, people with limited financial resources and people with disabilities. The center is also home to ten independent resident organizations.

## RESIDENT ORGANIZATIONS

Bach Dancing and Dynamite Society  
Children's Theater of Madison  
Forward Theater Company  
Kanopy Dance Company  
Li Chiao-Ping Dance Company  
Madison Ballet  
Madison Opera  
Madison Symphony Orchestra  
Wisconsin Academy's James Watrous Gallery  
Wisconsin Chamber Orchestra

Internationally renowned architect Cesar Pelli designed the center to provide the best possible environment for artists and audiences, as well as to complement Madison's urban environment. Performance spaces range from the spectacular 2,250-seat Overture Hall to the casual and intimate Rotunda Stage. The renovated Capitol Theater seats approximately 1,110, and The Playhouse seats 350. In addition, three multi-purpose spaces provide flexible performance, meeting and rehearsal facilities. Overture Center also features several art exhibit spaces. Overture Galleries I, II and III display works by Dane County artists. The Playhouse Gallery features regional artists with an emphasis on collaborations with local organizations. The Wisconsin Academy of Sciences, Arts and Letters' Watrous Gallery displays works by Wisconsin artists, and the Madison Museum of Contemporary Art offers works by national and international artists.

Dear Teachers,

In this resource guide you will find valuable information that will help you apply your academic goals to your students’ performance experience. We have included suggestions for activities which can help you prepare students to see this performance, ideas for follow-up activities, and additional resources you can access on the web. Along with these activities and resources, we’ve also included the applicable Wisconsin Academic Standards in order to help you align the experience with your curriculum requirements.

This Educator’s Resource Guide for this OnStage presentation of **Mariachi Rock Revolution** is designed to:

- Extend the scholastic impact of the performance by providing discussion ideas, activities and further reading which promote learning across the curriculum;
- Promote arts literacy by expanding students’ knowledge of music, science, storytelling and theatre;
- Illustrate that the arts are a legacy reflecting the values, custom, beliefs, expressions and reflections of a culture;
- Use the arts to teach about the cultures of other people and to celebrate students’ own heritage through self-reflection;
- Maximize students’ enjoyment and appreciation of the performance.

We hope this performance and the suggestions in this resource guide will provide you and your students opportunities to apply art learning in your curricula, expanding it in new and enriching ways.

Enjoy the Show!

**We Want Your Feedback!**

OnStage performances can be evaluated online! Evaluations are vital to the future and funding of this program. Your feedback educates us about the ways the program is utilized and we often implement your suggestions.

Follow this link: <https://form.jotform.com/252614119409152>

and fill out an evaluation. We look forward to hearing from you.

**Education Categories**



Language Arts



Social Emotional



Social Studies



*Image courtesy of Mariachi Rock Revolution*

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*Image courtesy of Mariachi Rock Revolution*

## About **Mariachi Rock Revolution**

If the phrase “mariachi music” makes you think of bright, brassy horns played by men in snappy suits with short jackets and wide-brimmed hats, get ready for a big surprise.

The six musicians making up the Mariachi Rock Revolution band can all play blistering versions of traditional mariachi music, but they’ve added in a few extras, starting with arena rock attitude.

Throw in electric violins and guitars, a drum kit, and face make-up that evokes Lucha Libre wrestling masks, Day of the Dead calavera (skulls), and Kiss.

Founder Haydn Vitera described the Austin-based group as “a Mexican Trans-Siberian Orchestra,” and that captures the vibe perfectly.

But for Vitera and the other members of MRR, as the band refers to itself, this musical mélange is more than a gimmick.

It’s a continuation of the cultural connections that created mariachi in the first place, plus, a platform for building community and encouraging student musicians.

Mariachi is often seen as a symbol of Mexico’s cultural identity. It grew out of a blend of the music of indigenous people, colonizing Spaniards, and enslaved Africans.

Cultural fusion brought these different musical styles together, and for MRR, their sizzling solos and rock star personas simply represent the latest stage of this evolution.



# About Mariachi



*Image courtesy of Creative Commons*

The style of music known as mariachi grew out of the intersection of people, cultures, and musical instruments mingling and inspiring each other in western Mexico, especially the state of Jalisco.

These groups included the indigenous people, who were here first, and used drums, rattles, and more.

The Spanish arrived later, bringing with them their culture and violins, woodwinds, brass instruments, and harps, plus the concept of an ensemble, or a group of people playing music together.

People from Africa and Cuba added their rhythms and instruments to the mix. Over the years, a unique sound began to emerge that combined these musical styles into a type of folk music called the “son.”

During the late 19th and early 20th centuries, as urban areas and the very idea of Mexico became more developed, so did the music, and this growth went hand-in-hand.

In fact, after the Mexican Revolution, the Mexican government even began promoting mariachi music as an international symbol of Mexican identity.

In 2011, the United Nations Education, Science, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), officially recognized mariachi as an Intangible Cultural Heritage of Mexico.

But even though this music is considered to be so central to Mexico’s identity, the origin of the name “mariachi” is not clear. Some people thought it came from the French word for marriage, because France occupied Mexico for a while as a colonial power.

However, “mariachi” was used to describe this music before the French arrived. Others suggested it referred to the wood used to make a platform for performing or referred to an indigenous tree.

But wherever the name came from, and however the music continues to evolve, as Haydn Vitera said, mariachi is all about the soul, pride, and passion of Mexico.

# About the Players

**Haydn Vitera**, founder and lead artist, is a 2-time Grammy-nominated musician from Austin, Texas. He has a solid background in classical music, having studied violin performance at the University of Texas at Austin (UT) and worked with the UT Symphony. Additionally, his mother is an opera singer.

His post-college career took a different turn when he went on the road with chart-topping country music artist Rick Trevino. This led to tours with bands such as Asleep at the Wheel, as well as solos with Stevie Wonder and George Strait.

Vitera is an advocate for music education in schools and established the Vitera Cares Foundation, a non-profit organization devoted to empowering local school music programs through education and innovative performances.

He wrote the following for the Mariachi Rock Revolution blog, “Music gave me confidence and a strong sense of identity as a shy kid growing up, and I’ve seen it transform the lives of countless young musicians through programs like Mark Wood’s Electrify Your Symphony, where I’ve mentored kids for a decade. They step on stage, play a solo, and suddenly realize they can do anything. That’s the real magic.”

**Dan Corona** is a guitarist working in a number of styles, from metal to Tejano (TexMex), to blues, to rock. He has played with performers such as Shelly Lares, Los Lonely Boys, Quiet Riot, and Great White.

**Juan Diaz** is a singer, songwriter, guitarist, and music instructor. After graduating from McCallum’s Fine Arts Academy in Austin, Texas, he studied Music and International Relations at St. Edward’s University. In addition to his work with MRR, he plays more traditional mariachi music with Alas d’Oro.



*Photo courtesy of Mariachi Rock Revolution*

**Felicia Rojas** is a Grammy-nominated violinist, vocalist, and music educator with a Doctorate of Musical Arts from Texas Tech University. She has performed with the Mariachi Divas and Mexican singer-songwriter Lila Downs. She also has her own band, AoE (Area of Effect), with which she sings in Japanese while playing covers of anime and video game music.

**Kevin Abbenante** is a drummer, mixing engineer, and lifelong resident of Austin, Texas. A professional musician for more than 13 years, he has performed and toured with many bands and worked as a session drummer on studio albums. He also teaches drums, bass, and guitar from his home studio.

**Rafael Mejia** is a Mexican musician, composer, and singer. In MRR, he primarily plays the bass guitar.

## The Outfit

The outfits worn by traditional mariachi players are called charro suits. These outfits consist of short jackets, tight pants for men or long skirts for women with embroidery or silver buttons on the side, a white cotton shirt, a loose silk tie, and a wide sombrero hat.

Charro outfits were originally work clothes worn by ranch hands and field workers. Over time, the image of charro became an important part of Mexican national identity, similar to the way cowboys are associated with the American identity.

Mexican President Benito Juárez reportedly encouraged mariachi players to adopt the charro outfit as their “uniform.” After Mexican movies featured proud, romantic, masculine movie stars wearing charro suits, the outfit became even more iconic.



*Photos courtesy of Mariachi Rock Revolution*



## The Electric Violin

If you thought violins were only played by people in formal attire sitting in the orderly rows of an orchestra. MRR probably changed that impression in a hurry. But violins have been used in surprising ways for a lot longer than you might think. Stuff Smith is credited with being the first person to play an electronically amplified violin in the 1920, close to 100 years ago.

It's possible to attach a “pickup” or different kinds of devices, to an acoustic violin so a musician can run the violin's sound through speakers. However, as interest in electric violins grows, many players are turning to solid-body instruments, like the ones MRR musicians use.

Solid-body electric violins are futuristic-looking instruments, and many different kinds are available. They're made from materials like Kevlar, which is also used to make bulletproof vests, rather than wood. Instead of the four strings found on a traditional acoustic violin, solid-body electric violins can have 5,6,7, or more strings.

## About Day of the Dead

Even with its links to the Celtic holiday of Samhain, Halloween in the U.S. today is primarily about costumes and candy. Although it's a big holiday, with Americans spending more than \$12 billion a year for costumes, candy, and decorations, it's still basically a one-day event.

In Mexico, the Day of the Dead is an even bigger affair. For one thing, it lasts longer, from October 31 to November 2. Despite the large number of skulls found everywhere, from candy to candles, Día de los Muertos (Day of the Dead in Spanish) is not about saying "Boo!" to the living. It is a celebratory occasion, all about honoring ancestors.

Like mariachi music, this holiday is what happens when two powerful cultures collide and create something new. In this case, the collision was between the religious and spiritual beliefs of the indigenous people and the Catholicism of the colonizing Spaniards.

Families create altars called ofrendas to remember those who have passed and leave food, water, and more to help their loved ones journey through the underworld, practices linked to native traditions.

The Spanish covered the graves of their loved ones with flowers and candles on All Souls' Day.

Both traditions are embraced in contemporary Mexico.



Photo

## Resources

The [website](#) for Mariachi Rock Revolution

[Link](#) to YouTube videos of Mariachi Rock Revolution

This [article](#) provides an overview of metal music

[Fun facts](#) about metal music

More information on [traditional mariachi music](#)

[Background](#) on the Day of the Dead

More information on the [Day of the Dead](#)

An article on the [similarities and differences](#) between Lucha Libre Mexican and American professional wrestling

Background on the [electric violin](#)

[More](#) on the electric violin

More information on the origins of the [charro outfit](#) worn by traditional mariachis

Vitero Cares Music Foundation [website](#)



## Comparing Cultural Holidays

*What comparisons can you draw from the artistic and cultural traditions of Halloween and the Day of the Dead?*

**Grades 3-5 Lesson:** Comparing Cultural Holidays

**Grade Band:** 3-5

**Arts Subject:** Visual Arts

**Other Subject:** English & Literature, Language Studies, History

### SUMMARY

In this 3-5 lesson, students will explore the holiday traditions, music, and art of Halloween and Día de los Muertos. Students will create an altar in memory of a loved one.

### PREPARATION

#### Learning Objectives

Students will:

- Compare how the holidays of Halloween (in the United States) and Día de los Muertos (in Mexico) are celebrated.
- Research the traditions, music, and history of Halloween and El Día de los Muertos.
- Create an altarpiece in honor of someone who has passed on.

### Standards Alignment

#### National Core Arts Standards

[VA:Cr2.1.3a](#) Create personally satisfying artwork using a variety of artistic processes and materials.

[VA:Cr2.1.4a](#) Explore and invent art-making techniques and approaches.

[VA:Cr2.1.5a](#) Experiment and develop skills in multiple art-making techniques and approaches through practice.

[VA:Re.7.2.3a](#) Determine messages communicated by an image.

[VA:Re.7.2.4a](#) Analyze components in visual imagery that convey messages.

[VA:Re.7.2.5a](#) Identify and analyze cultural associations suggested by visual imagery.

[VA:Pr6.1.3a](#) Identify and explain how and where different cultures record and illustrate stories and history of life through art.

[VA:Pr5.1.3a](#) Identify exhibit space and prepare works of art including artists' statements, for presentation.

#### Common Core State Standards

[ELA-LITERACY.W.3.2](#) Write informative/explanatory texts to examine a topic and convey ideas and information clearly.

[ELA-LITERACY.SL.3.3](#) Ask and answer questions about information from a speaker, offering appropriate elaboration and detail.



[ELA-LITERACY.SL.3.4](#) Report on a topic or text, tell a story, or recount an experience with appropriate facts and relevant, descriptive details, speaking clearly at an understandable pace.

[ELA-LITERACY.W.4.2](#) Write informative/explanatory texts to examine a topic and convey ideas and information clearly.

[ELA-LITERACY.SL.4.4](#) Report on a topic or text, tell a story, or recount an experience in an organized manner, using appropriate facts and relevant, descriptive details to support main ideas or themes; speak clearly at an understandable pace.

[ELA-LITERACY.W.5.2](#) Write informative/explanatory texts to examine a topic and convey ideas and information clearly.

[ELA-LITERACY.SL.5.4](#) Report on a topic or text or present an opinion, sequencing ideas logically and using appropriate facts and relevant, descriptive details to support main ideas or themes; speak clearly at an understandable pace.

### Recommended Student Materials

**Editable Documents:** *Before sharing these resources with students, you must first save them to your Google account by opening them, and selecting “Make a copy” from the File menu.*

Check out [Sharing Tips](#) or [Instructional Benefits](#) when implementing Google Docs and Google Slides with students.

- [Vocabulary](#)
- [Organizer: Comparing Cultural Holidays](#)
- [Slide: El Día de los Muertos Altar](#)

### Videos

- [Coco's - Un Poco Loco](#)

### Websites

- [Google Map of Mexico](#)
- [Halloween BrainPop](#)
- [Halloween Britannica Kids](#)
- [Day of the Dead Britannica Kids](#)

### Teacher Background

Teachers should review these resources to familiarize themselves with customs associated with the Day of the Dead. Review the book recommendations, but feel free to substitute for a different Day of the Dead book: [The Festival of Bones](#) by Luis San Vicente, [A Gift for Abuelita: Celebrating the Day of the Dead](#) by Nancy Luenn, [The Day of the Dead](#) by Bob Barner. Spanish language teachers may choose to modify the lesson to meet language requirements.

*Note: The process of creating the altar may be sensitive or emotional for some students. Encourage students to use only positive, constructive feedback. Circulate the room offering guidance and support.*



## Student Prerequisites

Students should know where Mexico is located (review [Google Map of Mexico](#)) and general facts about Mexican culture (language, food, dress).

## Accessibility Notes

Modify handouts as needed and allow extra time for task completion.

## INSTRUCTION

### Engage

**1. Play a short clip of [Coco's - "Un Poco Loco."](#)** Ask students to share what they know about Mexico or the movie *Coco*. Explain to students that the purpose of this lesson is to learn about another culture. Learning about another culture's traditions can deepen our understanding of cultural diversity.

**2. Ask the students what they think of, and how they might define, the words "holiday," "celebrate," and "tradition."** Ask students to share examples of each one. Record student responses on chart paper or an interactive board.

**3. Review [Vocabulary](#) with students.**

**4. Engage students in a discussion about Halloween.** Discuss what students in the class do if they observe Halloween. *What do you do for Halloween? How do you dress up? Are there special events you attend?* Quite a few students may not observe the holiday. Discuss the reasons for not celebrating the holiday, including religious objections.

**5. Discuss the history of Halloween.** Explain that in ancient Celtic times (in the region that is now England, Ireland, Wales, and Scotland), Halloween was regarded as a time when the spirits of those that had died the previous year returned to Earth. The living put on masks to seek protection by hiding from the spirits. Halloween occurs on October 31st and is also called All Hallows' Eve. Explain that in the Roman Catholic religion, November 1st is known as All Saints' Day. It is a "holy day of obligation" (a day on which Catholics are required to attend mass). It is a day that honors the saints whose birth or death anniversaries are not known. The following day, All Souls' Day, honors all others who have died. In England, it was once the custom to give money and food to the poor on All Souls' Day. This led to the custom of children begging for treats on Halloween.

**6. Tell the students that in Mexico, November 1st and 2nd are known as "El Día de los Muertos" or "Los Días de los Muertos" (Day of the Dead).** During this annual event, which is a blend of Spanish Catholic traditions and native beliefs in Mexico, people create altars to honor departed relatives. Families gather items such as marigolds, the relative's favorite food, and pictures of the person. They take these items to the graveyard and have a picnic or party on the grave. This tradition is thought to make death less frightening because it shows that you



will be remembered after you have died. It also helps to console the living people who miss the deceased individual.

### Build

**1. Divide the class into pairs or small groups to research about Halloween and El Día de los Muertos.** Use the [Organizer: Comparing Cultural Holidays](#) to compare the two holidays looking for examples of music and visual art. The students should conduct research using print and web resources like [Halloween BrainPop](#), [Halloween Britannica Kids](#), and [Day of the Dead Britannica Kids](#).

**2. Have the groups share their research with the class. As a follow-up to this activity, note that many cultures have traditions for honoring the dead.** In Afghanistan, one prepares and eats the favorite food of the deceased relative for a month after he/she died on Thursdays. Vietnamese and Koreans create shrines to honor ancestors like the altars in Mexico. Japanese Buddhists clean homes and prepare special foods for a three-day celebration of the dead in July.

### Apply

**1. Show students the [Slide: El Día de los Muertos Altar](#).** Explain to each student group that they will be creating an altar, similar to those used on El Día de los Muertos, to honor a relative or special person who has died. Honoring and celebrating the life of a departed loved one is a way to keep that person living on in the hearts of those left behind. *(Note: If the students do not personally know of a person who has died, tell them to talk to their parents or guardian about someone meaningful in their life who passed away.)*

**2. Gather resources and set up the altar using the [Creating an Altar](#) resource.** Encourage each group to individualize their altar with a variety of art supplies, including paint, colored paper, and crayons or markers. *(Note: The process of creating the altar may be sensitive or emotional for some students. Encourage students to use only positive, constructive feedback. Circulate the room offering guidance and support.)*

### Reflect

**1. When students have completed their altars, have each group present their altar to the class with an explanation of the meaning of each item on the altar.**

**2. Assess students' knowledge with one of the following writing prompts:** *What is the importance of Día de los Muertos to the Mexican culture and how does it relate to Halloween? What comparisons can you draw about Halloween and Día de los Muertos?*

### Credits

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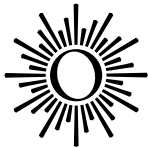
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# BE YOUR OWN CRITIC

Now it is your turn to tell us what you thought about the performance that you saw at Overture Center! Use this worksheet to brainstorm some ideas. Make sure to use specific examples from the performance. If you forgot anything, ask your friends and teachers who went to the show with you. Turn your ideas into a rough draft and then send a final copy to us!

I saw \_\_\_\_\_  
(SHOW TITLE)

Overture Center is...



\_\_\_\_\_

because...

\_\_\_\_\_

What would you say this show is about?



\_\_\_\_\_

Two things that I really loved about the performance were...



\_\_\_\_\_



\_\_\_\_\_

Two things that could have been better in the performance were...



\_\_\_\_\_



\_\_\_\_\_

I thought the artistic elements (scenery, sound/music, lighting, costumes) were...



\_\_\_\_\_

because...

\_\_\_\_\_

I would want to meet the character...



\_\_\_\_\_

in real life because...

\_\_\_\_\_

If I could ask the performer(s) a question, I would ask them...



\_\_\_\_\_

Imagine that you're telling a friend about this show. What would you say?



\_\_\_\_\_

# Wisconsin Academic Standards

## Music

*(Wisconsin Standards for Music, 2017)*

*Standard 3: Respond*

MG3.R.5.i: Recognize and define grade- appropriate foundational musical elements.

MG3.R.7.i: Utilize appropriate music terminology in the evaluation /reflection of music performances.

MG3.R.8.i: Demonstrate proper concert/audience etiquette.

*Standard 4: Connect*

MG4.Cn.5.i: Compare the historical and cultural aspects of music with other disciplines.

MG4.Cn.6.i: Explain how music relates to self, others, and the world.

MG4.Cn.7.i: Examine and evaluate musical connections, similarities, and differences.

MG4.Cn.8.i Describe roles of musicians in various music settings and world cultures.

## Social Studies

*(Wisconsin Standards for Social Studies 2018)*

*Behavioral Studies*

SS.BH1.b.4 Describe how culture, ethnicity, race, age, religion, gender, and social class can help form self-image and identity.

SS.BH2.a.4-5 Compare how people from different cultures solve common problems, such as distribution of food, shelter, and social interactions.

SS.BH2.b.4 Give examples of how peoples from different cultures develop different values and ways of interpreting experiences.



*Photo courtesy of Mariachi Rock Revolution*

# About Live Performance

Theater, unlike movies or television, is a **LIVE** performance. This means that the action unfolds right in front of an audience, and the performance is constantly evolving. The artists respond to the audience's laughter, clapping, gasps and general reactions. Therefore, the audience is a critical part of the theater experience. In fact, without you in the audience, the artists would still be in rehearsal!

Remember, you are sharing this performance space with the artists and other audience members. Your considerate behavior allows everyone to enjoy a positive theater experience.

**Prepare:** Be sure to use the restroom before the show begins!

**Find Your Seat:** When the performance is about to begin, the lights will dim. This is a signal for the artists and the audience to put aside conversations. Settle into your seat and get ready to enjoy the show!

**Look and Listen:** There is so much to hear (dialogue, music, sound effects) and so much to see (costumes, props, set design, lighting) in this performance. Pay close attention to the artists onstage. Unlike videos, you cannot rewind if you miss something.

**Energy and Focus:** Artists use concentration to focus their energy during a performance. The audience gives energy to the artist, who uses that energy to give life to the performance. Help the artists focus that energy. They can feel that you are with them!

Talking to neighbors (even whispering) can easily distract the artists onstage. They approach their audiences with respect, and expect the same from you in return. Help the artists concentrate with your attention.

**Laugh Out Loud:** If something is funny, it's good to laugh. If you like something a lot, applaud. Artists are thrilled when the audience is engaged and responsive. They want you to laugh, cheer, clap and really enjoy your time at the theater.

**Discover New Worlds:** Attending a live performance is a time to sit back and look inward, and question what is being presented to you. Be curious about new worlds, experience new ideas, and discover people and lives previously unknown to you. Your open mind, curiosity, and respect will allow a whole other world to unfold right before your eyes!

**Please, don't feed the audience:** Food is not allowed in the theater. Soda and snacks are noisy and distracting to both the artists and audience.

**Unplug:** Please turn off all cell phones and other electronics before the performance. Photographs and recording devices are prohibited.







Overture  
CENTER FOR THE ARTS



PARTNERS:



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Overture Center's mission is to support and elevate our community's creative culture, economy and quality of life through the arts.

**[overture.org/onstage](http://overture.org/onstage)**

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