Mariachi Educators Conference Brings Together International Participants

LBC's second annual Mariachi Educators Conference in January gathered participants from Spain, Arizona, Las Vegas, southern California, and Sonoma County to learn from master mariachi teaching artists Dr. Jeff Nevin, Johnny Contreras, and Perry Chacon. The purpose of the conference is to equip music educators to be able to introduce mariachi in their regular curriculum and implement programs in their communities. Another goal for LBC is to increase the number of local mariachi teachers so we can continue providing excellent year-round and summer mariachi camps in our community.

The magic of this conference is helping educators realize they too can teach mariachi. LBC's Music Specialist, José Soto, says, “The best mariachi teachers already know how to teach music. Here, educators are exploring instruments and learning about the style, including culture, technique, and rhythms. The notes are the same; mariachi is just a different style of music.”

The conference included music teachers, professional musicians, and college students studying music education. The varied backgrounds of participants made for a lively and engaging experience for everyone. One participant said, “The conference was inspiring. It was very culturally relevant and I’m excited to start a mariachi program where I teach.”

Renowned Instrument Craftsman Visits LBC

Alejandro Vivar from Spain is one of the most renown luthiers in the world. He builds vihuelas and guitarróns, the most traditional and important instruments in a mariachi band, all by hand. After months of building several vihuelas and guitarróns for the LBC’s growing mariachi program, Vivar traveled to Sonoma County to present the hand-crafted instruments. Vivar spoke to teachers attending the Mariachi Educators Conference and to the students and families who are part of our year-round mariachi program. Both groups had the privilege to learn about the history of the instruments as well as the process of how each one is built.

During the presentations Vivar explained, “Building instruments is another beautiful form of art.” He says, “The musician should not have to learn the nuances of an instrument. Rather, the instrument should be built for the way the musician plays.”
Teacher Artist Training
Classroom Management
Wednesday, February 19
4:00 – 7:00pm
Instructor: Hannah Keefer
Explore different tools and techniques to navigate interactions with schools and students while setting yourself and your students up for success.

Teacher Workshop
Activating Critical Thinking and Collaboration Through Drama and Literature
Tuesday, March 3
8:00 – 11:00am
Instructor: Ashleigh Worley
Grades Covered: 3–6
Subjects Covered: Drama, English Language Arts, Story Creation
Activate creativity and critical thinking by approaching chapter books through the lens of dramatization with your students.

Teacher Workshop
Play Me a Book!
Wednesday, April 8
8:00 – 11:00am
Instructor: Deborah Sunya Moore
Grades Covered: K–2
Subjects Covered: English Language Arts, Music, Rhythm
Integrate elements of music with reading strategies to enhance student comprehension, skills, enthusiasm, and experience.
Exploring Día de los Muertos
Instructor: Christina Klauenburch
Grades: 3–6
Subjects: English Language Arts, Social Studies, Visual Arts
Experience culture through the creation of altars, sugar skulls, and visual art.

Textile Design: Cultural History through Printmaking
Instructor: Jennifer Mygatt Tatum
Grade: 5–8
Subjects: Visual Arts, Social Studies
Analyze and create textile patterns adapted to grade-specific cultural studies.

UPCOMING SCHOOL SHOWS

Ballet Hispánico
Grades 5–12
Monday, March 2 at 9:30am
Embark on a guided journey through Latin American dance and music with a master teaching artist and excerpts of the Ballet Hispánico repertory. Latin music, cultural connections, choreography insights, and dance history come together as students explore cultures of Spain, Cuba, Puerto Rico, and the Americas, while learning about Latinx icons such as Celia Cruz and Tito Puente.

Alphabet Rockers
Grades PK–2
Tuesday, March 3 at 9:30am
The Grammy-nominated Alphabet Rockers create dynamic hip-hop for young ages. With songs about the days of the week, bullying, colors, and eating healthy, this group makes learning fun and interactive!
Cinderella
by Panto Theater
Grades K–5
Monday, March 9 at 9:30am
The classic fairy tale based on a legend first told more than a thousand years ago comes to life with original modern songs, bursting with more hilarity than you can imagine, and a happy ending!

Literature to Life®'s production of
Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl
by Harriet Jacobs
Grades 7–12
Tuesday, March 24 at 9:30am
This stage adaptation featuring verbatim portions of the critically acclaimed memoir in a tour-de-force solo performance. This powerful piece explores themes such as racism, social institutions, resilience, and survival.

Information about scholarship opportunities is available here.
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