What Students Are Saying About Mariachi

“I really like mariachi. I listen to rap, I listen to everything. But mariachi is different. It shows more emotion. And it shows me what my culture is all about, how people felt before I was born. In what other program could you learn a song in a week or two on an instrument? It really boosted my confidence.”

Perry Chacon
Chula Vista, CA

As a middle school student, Jorge Geraldo, who is now a high school senior, spent a brief stint playing Sousa marches and Bruce Springsteen medleys on the trombone as a member of the marching band. "I tried to relate, but it was really weird," he said. "It's hard being Mexican in America, because society says you have to adjust to succeed."

Then he discovered mariachi, developing calluses to play the guitarrón, a six-string bass, his voice perfectly suited for Romeo-like songs of temptresses and betrayed love. "Something took over me," he recalled. "I felt alive, I guess. It was like, 'Wow.' I didn't know you could do that with music." "Our teacher wants us to respect ourselves," said Jorge Geraldo, who plans to enter college next year. "That's the whole deal."

Jorge Geraldo
Chula Vista, CA

"It's a different culture than mine, so to learn it is cool. Most of my friends are Hispanic. This makes me feel involved with them.”

Connie Kakhigna
Concord, CA

“They’ll [mariachi students] learn how to be a soloist and play louder and with more energy,” he says.

Michael Pelayo
San Diego, CA

“It's been a big change to learn a different style of music, but I’m enjoying it and hope to come back after I graduate to watch, practice and perform with the band. Other students wanting to join the [mariachi] band want to join, but the class is full so we had to turn them away”.

Elias Leon
Charleston, SC

“This is the only cultural activity related to being Hispanic that I get to do at school. We are grateful for the opportunity.”

Jaime Lopez
Charleston, SC