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PROGRAM NOTES: Mariachi Sol De México®

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Mariachi Sol De México® De José Hernández
José L Hernández, Musical Director

This evening's program will be announced from the stage.
There will be one intermission during the program.

The Ensemble

José Hernández, Musical Director

FIRST VIOLINS
Erick Hernández
Joaquín Rodríguez

HARP
Guillermo G. Acuña

SECOND VIOLINS
Fernando Moreno
Roberto López

GUITARRON
Jorge Flores

THIRD VIOLINS
Gustavo Pena
Guadalupe González

VIHUELA
Anthony Zúñiga

TRUMPETS
José L Hernández
Jorge Contreras
Adrian Mendoza

GUITAR
Jesús Hernández

(Presented in partnership with)

(Special thanks to our media partners)

Pleiades Management manages Mariachi Sol De México® De José Hernández.
Call (323)665-8040 for more information.

Booking:
AnneMarie Martins
SRO Artists, Inc.
(608)664-8160
www.sroartists.com

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The Origin of Mariachi

The word “mariachi” is a term that can be used to describe the individual musician, the ensemble, or the musical genre itself. A definitive origin has never been established. Perhaps the most common misconception is that the term is derived from the French word for “marriage” - *mariage* - the theory being that these unnamed ensembles were often hired by the French court in Mexico during the Maximilian epoch (1861-1867) to play at fiestas and weddings. Presumably, Mexicans began calling these groups of strolling musicians “mariachi.” Today there are many facts to support the idea that the term predates the French occupation. Many Mexican scholars argue that groups called “mariachi” were already in existence by 1830.

Scholarly investigations also support the possibility of indigenous roots. Evidence substantiates the existence of an Indian “mariachi” that used a single-head skin drum. One investigation suggests the term derives from the Yutonahuatl language group, signifying a hard floor or dance area called a *miriache* of *tarima*. Another hypothesis suggests that the term comes from celebrations honoring the Virgin known as “Maria H” - “Maria Hache”.

The Instruments of Mariachi

The original mariachi came from rural Western Mexico, primarily the states of Jalisco, Colima, Michoacán, Nayarit, and Sinaloa. The first groups were string-based ensembles, making the term mariachi “band” inappropriate as bands, by definition, emphasize brass and woodwinds. The first mariachi instrumentation consisted primarily of violins and the diatonic harp - a non-pedal, and therefore non-chromatic, instrument. The harp provided rhythmic and harmonic support while the violins played the melodic lines.

As the mariachi ensemble developed, a small, generally five-stringed flat-back guitar, called a *quinta* or *guitarra de golpe* was added to support the rhythm. In the area around Cocula, for reasons not completely understood, a rounded-back set of instruments was used instead. The five-stringed *vihuela*, a rounded-back instrument, along with the more recent addition of the guitar, provides the underlying rhythm essential for the musical sound of every mariachi ensemble.

The *guitarron*, a larger rounded-back instrument, plays the bass-line. The original *guitarron* used four or five gut strings; eventually the instrument became standardized with six nylon strings, giving it sufficient volume to support the bass. Because it is capable of modulating to different keys (and because it is easier to carry), the *guitarron* eventually replaced the harp in most ensembles.

In the early 1930s, when the ensembles began to think in terms of arrangements and commercial possibilities, a trumpet was added, the rationale being that it would create a better, more penetrating sound for radio broadcasts. In later years, two trumpets became a standard part of mariachi ensembles, although it is not uncommon to find three or more in some of today’s groups. Mariachi Sol de México instrumentation includes three trumpets.

Mariachi Sol de México® de José Hernández Background

In 1981, at the age of 23, Mr. Jose Hernandez founded Mariachi Sol de Mexico in Los Angeles, California. As true representatives of a treasured musical heritage, the 33 year old Mariachi Sol de Mexico has grown to become a dynamic team that has accepted the mantle as the nation's mariachi ambassadors. More than any American citizen, Maestro Hernandez is responsible for the recognition that this musical tradition is receiving throughout the world. His ensemble of musical artists brings together refined vocal power and superb musicianship. His 13 member concert mariachi ensemble is one of the finest mariachi ensembles to be found both in Mexico and the United States.

Mr. Hernandez' compositions are bright, splashy celebrations. No one else in the mariachi music scene navigates traditional Mexican folk, classical, and pop music with such grace.

Their 8th CD was nominated for a Grammy in 2001 (*Tequila con Limon con El Mariachi Sol de Mexico*). This nomination made them the first mariachi ensemble to receive such an honor. Their 13th CD, *25 Aniversario José Hernández y Su Mariachi Sol de México*, was also nominated for a Grammy in 2007. Their most recent recording, *LA MUSICA, Mariachi Sol de México de José Hernández con La Sinfónica Nacional de Las Américas*, was nominated for a Latin Grammy in 2013.

Hernandez has taken his ensemble to perform with the New Mexico, Denver, Sacramento, San Francisco, and Los Angeles symphony orchestras.

Sol has recorded with American and Mexican artists such as Linda Ronstadt, Willie Nelson, Juan Gabriel, Lola Beltran, Vicente Fernandez, Green Day, Luis Miguel, Shaila Durcal, and Vikki Carr.

Mr. Hernandez has grown to become an American cultural ambassador having toured to Spain, Chile, Venezuela, and Colombia, as well as holding the distinction of being the first mariachi to perform in the People's Republic of China and North Korea.

Jose Hernandez comes from a family that has been performing mariachi music for five generations. He has shared the stage with his five brothers since the age of three. His fluent mastery of the medium has led him to assist in many film scores. He has participated in more than 20 Hollywood soundtracks including *Rango*, *Seabiscuit*, *Don Juan De Marco*, and *A Million to Juan*.

Mariachi Sol de Mexico represents 126 years of mariachi tradition. 2016 marks their 35th Anniversary.

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