

## Teaching Mariachi Trumpet Style

Although there is no single way of teaching mariachi style to beginner students, critical listening to recordings is essential. When it comes to trumpet, the most influential mariachi performer is Miguel Martínez. He is widely credited with single-handedly creating the mariachi trumpet style. Students will derive great benefit from listening to his performances on Mariachi Vargas de Tecalitlán recordings from the 1950s, 1960s, 1970s, and early 1980s, which illustrate his style in great depth and breadth. His influence is also evident in the more contemporary recordings of both the Mariachi Vargas and other leading mariachis, such as Mariachi Sol de México, Mariachi Los Camperos de Nati Cano, Mariachi Cobre, Mariachi México de Pepe Villa, and Mariachi América de Jesús Rodríguez de Híjar.

Young trumpet players should try to internalize and imitate the sound and style of these recordings. Critical listening will also make standard mariachi articulations and tonguings more accessible. Students can also try to make connections with the violin bowings and the strumming patterns (*mánicos*) of the *armonías* sections, as these articulations often mirror those of the trumpets. Whenever possible, observe the rhythms of ballet *folklórico* dancers, as they too reflect many of the articulations of the guitars, thus providing the trumpets with a guide.

### Vibrato

The recommended way of acquiring and adapting a traditional mariachi trumpet vibrato is to develop a jaw vibrato. Use a metronome to create a process by which the student subdivides the beat into increasingly smaller parts. Steve Carrillo of Mariachi Cobre recalls being taught to perform the characteristic mariachi vibrato many years ago, by one of today's greatest mariachi





“Las Mañanitas,” the ubiquitous birthday song and Mothers’ Day serenade, is one of the most frequently performed pieces within the mariachi repertoire. The instrumental introduction and middle transition section of the song are presented here. Notice the total absence of slurs:



The typical endings of *rancheras* in 3/4 time may be given various interpretations. Here is an example of one way to articulate this very common ending formula:



The polka and the closely related *ranchera* “*polqueada*” are two genres integral to the mariachi repertoire. Observe the following example of a typical articulation pattern presented in “Atotonilco,” composed by Dr. Juan José Espinosa:



Mariachis customarily play a variety of musical genres, a number of which require the production of a lyrical timbre. Sebastián Yradier’s world-famous “La Paloma” demonstrates the *danza habanera* genre with its distinctive lyrical sound:

La Paloma



The style that demonstrates a totally unique mariachi sound is the *son jalisciense*. Three well-known examples of this genre, “Camino Real de Colima,” “El Relámpago,” and “La Negra,” have been presented below. Notice all articulations; they are not what non-mariachi trumpet players would have typically chosen to play:

Camino Real de Colima



El Relámpago



La Negra



Proper articulation of the traditional ending patterns for the *son jalisciense* is another often neglected but stylistically critical aspect of trumpet playing. Here we demonstrate two of the most common:

Son endings



# Trumpet Scales

(Common Mariachi Keys)

Concert

The image displays six musical staves, each representing a different key signature for trumpet scales. Each staff begins with a treble clef, a key signature of one or two sharps, and a 4/4 time signature. The scales are written in a descending sequence of notes. Fingering numbers (1, 2, 3) are placed below the notes to indicate fingerings. The scales are labeled with their respective notes: G (Sol), A (La), C (Do), D (Re), E (Mi), and F (Fa). The word 'Concert' is written above the first staff.

**G (Sol)**  
Fingering: 123, 2, 23, 12

**A (La)**  
Fingering: 123, 23, 2, 23, 1

**C (Do)**  
Fingering: 2, 23, 12, 1

**D (Re)**  
Fingering: 2, 23, 12, 2

**E (Mi)**  
Fingering: 2, 23, 1, 12, 23, 0, 2, 2

**F (Fa)**  
Fingering: 2

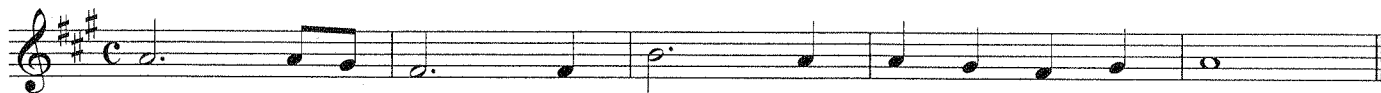
*From "Teaching Trumpet Technique to Mariachi Students"  
By Noé Sánchez, Steve Carrillo, and William Gradante  
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Trumpets

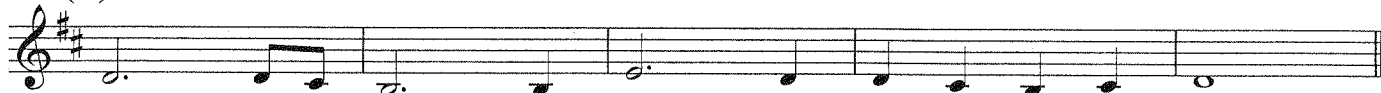
# Mariachi Círculos Warmups

Concert  
Sol (G)

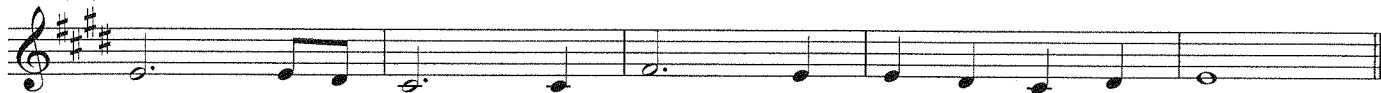
Noé Sánchez  
©2002



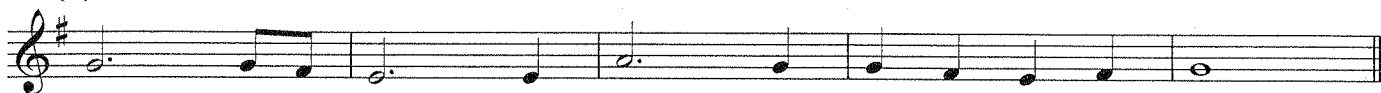
Do (C)



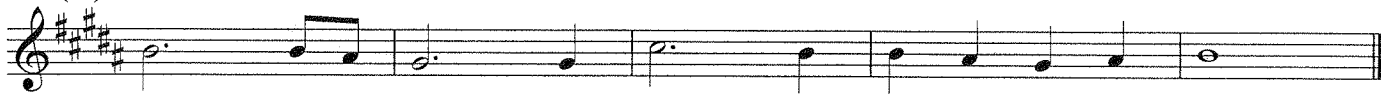
Re (D)



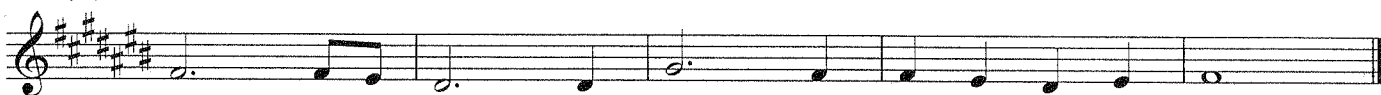
Fa (F)



La (A)



Mi (E)



Si (B)



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