

# URBANGATEWAYS

## FANDANGO SON MONARCAS



### MEET THE ARTIST

Son Monarcas, formally Tarima Son, is a traditional and contemporary musical group that was formed in 2002. This dynamic ensemble specializes in music from Mexico, specifically exploring the native Mexican, African, and Spanish influences on the rhythms, movement, and melodies of Mexico.

The group has performed in many venues around the Chicago area, including the Old Town School of Folk Music, the Folk and Arts Fest in Evanston, The National Museum of Mexican Art, The Field Museum and others. They have also been seen in prestigious festivals like the Folklife Fest of the Smithsonian Museum in Washington D.C. and have performed throughout the United States.

The members of Son Monarcas have rich experience in the field of education. They teach Mexican music and dance, conduct poetry and musical workshops, and lead students in the process of making instruments which include clay whistles, straw trumpets, drums, and maracas. This passion for education comes through in their school performances as they seek to create connections between this traditional art form and the lives of the students today.

### ABOUT THE PERFORMANCE

The show introduces different styles of the traditional Mexican music and dancing as well as a variety of traditional instruments including: Guitar, Jarana, Violin, Vihuela, Harp (string instruments), Donkey jaw, Cajon, Tamborita, Tarima (percussion), flutes and ocarinas (wind) and more. Music is demonstrated from every region or state in Mexico including: Son Jarocho, Huasteco, Mariachi, Planeco, Calentano, Ranchero, etc.

### TECHNICAL REQUIREMENTS

- Access to electricity
- Sound system with two microphones
- Private dressing room near performance space (preferably not a student bathroom).

## CONTEXTUAL INFORMATION

**Mexican Son Music:** The term *son* (which literally translates as “sound”) refers to a particular type of Mexican folk music from the countryside. This designation for rural folk music comes from a colonial distinction made between *música*, which was the music of the church and the court, and the more derogatory *son*, which was the noise everyone else made.

*Son* originated in Central Mexico, defined broadly, and is a fusion of Spanish, African, and indigenous music. Today, *son mexicano* is a very general category that encompasses nine different types of rural folk music that each correlate to a specific region of Mexico. Interestingly, *son* is now also played in urban centers and performed in places far from its native region. Each type of *son* has its own instrumentation, but string instruments dominate. A 6/8 meter and the accompanying foot stomping *zapateado* also link the diverse currents of *son*.

*Son* is a genre of traditional Mexican folk music and dance that is performed in different variation across Mexico. The genre most likely originated in Veracruz, an eastern state along the gulf. The music relies heavily on string instruments such as the guitar and violin, and incorporates elements from Spanish Baroque music that was introduced into Mexico during the colonial period. The dance style that is associated with *Son* is a social dance that includes a stomping rhythm on a raised platform to provide percussion.

**Huapango** is a Mexican folk dance and music style, part of the style *Son Huasteco*, popular in the Mexican area known as La Huasteca. *Huapango* is from the Nahuatl word *cuauhpanco* that literally means “on top of the wood”, alluding to a wooden platform on which dancers can make *zapateado* dance steps. There are three traditional ways the *Huapango* is interpreted: the most common is the classic *huapango*, performed by a trio of musicians (*un trio huasteco*); the second is the *huapango norteño*, which is performed by a group (*un conjunto norteño*); and the last is the *huapango de mariachi*, which can be performed by a large number of musicians.



## RESOURCES

YouTube video: huapango de mariachi  
<https://goo.gl/gzUbZE>

Mexican and Chicano Music by José “Pepe” Villarino (available on Amazon)

Map of Mexico coloring page  
<https://goo.gl/b41uoR>

Mexican Music by Region  
<https://goo.gl/ZFGPaA>

## Chicago Guide for Teaching and Learning in Arts: Scope and Sequence

### Interpretation & Evaluation:

**Listen and Describe (IL 25A, 26A, 27A; Nat’l 6)**

- Identify and exhibit appropriate audience behavior for listening to music.
- Analyze the uses of elements of music in musical selections representing diverse genres and cultures.
- Analyze the tempo and dynamics in songs that represent diverse cultures and styles.

### Making Connections

**Cultural (IL 26B, 27A; Nat’l 9)**

- Distinguish styles of music in various cultures and periods and identify unique features.
- Describe how the elements of music are used in various genres and styles of music.
- Identify and describe in simple terms music from other cultures of the world, using the elements of music.

## PERFORMANCE INFORMATION

The show follows the following format:

- 1. THE NATIVE MEXICO Aztec-Maya (Mitote, Chitontequiza)**
  - a. Salutation of the four directions using ancient indigenous instruments
  - b. The Dance of Fire
  - c. La Golondrina: song from the Tabasco state usually performed for Chontal people.
- 2. THREE DIFFERENT WORLDS TOGETHER (Indigenous, Spanish, and African)**
  - a. El Trenecito, the train, a song and dance from the state of Michoacan where a dancer portrays an old man with traditional attire and invites the audience to join in.
  - b. El Cielito lindo, Huapango Huasteco popular style of music from Tamaulipas, Hidalgo, and Veracruz
  - c. The bull song and dance from Nayarit state along with explanations of how, when, and where this music is performed, featuring short stories related to each song
  - d. El Colas, Afromexican song and dance, brief explanation on how this music introduced to Mexico
  - e. Instruments, attire, Spanish, and Indigenous words are introduced
  - f. The audience is invited to participate with singing, dancing, and clapping
  - g. The show concludes with a performance of La Bamba in the traditional style, as well as a summary of the program with answers and questions

\* Fandango can be adapted to emphasize different occasions or themes including the Day of the Dead, Cinco de Mayo, Mexican Independence, African heritage, and more.

## CLASSROOM ACTIVITIES

1. Pair up students to research the different regions or states in Mexico. Have students share their findings with the class to provide some context before the show.
2. Have a discussion about why music is so important to society. Why do most societies/cultures have their own music genre? What do students' think is "traditional" American music?
3. Free-write: What is one thing you learned from today's show? Have students share their answers with a partner.
4. Make an instrument! Using found/recycled items (paper towel tubes, dried beans, paper plates, etc.) have students create an instrument that is inspired by nature and/or their surroundings. Ask students to decorate their instruments with symbols representing their lives just like the Aztecs.

## VOCABULARY

### FANDANGO

A particular style of party or gathering of dancers, musicians and public usually around a platform called "tarima" becomes from the word Fandango from Spain but with different meaning.

### TARIMA

A large, elevated wooden platform used for percussive dancing.

### SON

A style of Mexican music representing a fusion of indigenous, Spanish, and African musical elements, reflecting the population which evolved in the region from Spanish colonial times.

### ZAPATEADO

A Mexican dance with stamping and very fast footwork.

## SHOW INTRODUCTION

On the day of the performance, please have someone from the school read the following introduction when welcoming the performers onstage. "Today we have a show from Urban Gateways. Son Monarcas (moan-arc-as) presents Fandango, an exploration of Mexican music and dance. Please give the performers your full attention, and welcome them to the stage."