

READING SELECTION #2

DIRECTIONS: Read Selection 2, MARIACHI MUSICIAN IN MICHIGAN. Then answer the questions that follow. Mark all your answers on your Unit 2 ANSWER SHEET.

Mariachi Musician in Michigan



History has a funny way of repeating itself. Take me, Robert Dominguez, for example. I grew up in Lansing, Michigan, about 1,500 miles from Mexico. I never spoke Spanish when I was young. I never even *heard* Spanish except when my mom talked long distance to her mom—my grandmother—who lived in South Texas. Because she was so far from Lansing, I never got to know her.

If I had, I might have found out about her brother, my great-uncle, much earlier. He had been a well-known mariachi musician in Mexico. And I am an example of how history, once again, has repeated itself. Because, despite growing up far away from Mexico and its culture, I'm a mariachi musician too. Though not well-known. But Mr. Montoya, the director of the university mariachi orchestra I've joined, says that I play the *guitarrón* with talent. (It's the instrument that looks like a huge guitar and provides the bass line.)

So how did a kid in Michigan end up as a guitarrón player? I'll tell you. I took regular guitar lessons for several years. But I never really felt inspired. Then, when I was thirteen, I went to San Antonio to visit my cousin. He was a trumpet player in his school's mariachi band. He dragged me to a mariachi festival. I say "dragged" because I was expecting to be bored.

But, instead, the music was fascinating. Something in my blood responded to the syncopated rhythms of mariachi music. I also got caught up in the swirling sense of competition among the bands.

I left that festival feeling a little sad. I knew I would never have the opportunity to play in a mariachi band in Lansing.

But luck was with me. During my first year in high school, the Spanish teacher and the orchestra director started a mariachi band. Two years of serious instruction and frequent rehearsals followed. Then we were ready to compete. We won prizes at several festivals. We even played at Disney World during my senior year.

After I joined the band and got my own guitarrón, my mom told me about her uncle, my grandmother's brother. He had played the violin in a mariachi orchestra that became famous in his home state of Jalisco. Last year, my mom's cousin sent me a tattered photo of my great-uncle Ramón. It's amazing how little the outfit of mariachis has changed in fifty years.

Sometimes during a performance I find myself wishing my grandmother could see me. I think she would have liked this particular repetition of history.

"Mariachi Musician in Michigan"

Questions 12–22

- 12 The event that happened before the narrator went to San Antonio to visit his cousin was
- A learning that his great-uncle was a mariachi musician.
 - B attending a mariachi festival and competition.
 - C learning to play the *guitarrón*.
 - D taking regular guitar lessons.

MARIACHI FACTS

- Originally, mariachi music was played only by rural people; it gained popularity in all regions and cities of Mexico in the 1930s.
- Instruments in a typical mariachi group include 6 to 8 violins, 1 guitar, 3 trumpets, 1 *guitarrón* and 1 *vihuela* (a five-stringed instrument that resembles a small guitar).
- The standard uniform is a waist-length jacket and pants or skirt, both decorated with large silver buttons.
- A musical form called *son* is commonly played by mariachi groups; the popular song "Ea Bamba" is an example.

- 13 Based on this selection, readers can tell that
- A all mariachi festivals include a competition among bands.
 - B mariachi festivals are held on a regular basis at Disney World.
 - C mariachi music was once played in the Mexican state of Jalisco.
 - D the mariachi band the narrator joined was the first one in Michigan.
- 14 The influence that MOST DIRECTLY led the narrator to pursue mariachi music was
- A the high school Spanish teacher.
 - B disinterest in the guitar.
 - C his cousin's encouragement.
 - D his mother's expectation.
- 15 The detail that BEST illustrates the narrator's pride in his cultural background is
- A wishing that his grandmother could see him perform.
 - B never getting to know his grandmother, who lived far away.
 - C responding to the syncopated rhythms of mariachi music.
 - D his orchestra director saying that he plays the guitarrón with talent.
- 16 According to the selection, one thing the narrator and his great-uncle had in common is
- A the skill level they developed.
 - B the age at which they began to perform.
 - C the type of musical instrument they played.
 - D the clothing they wore during performances.
- 17 From the information in the "Mariachi Facts" section, readers can conclude that
- A a tourist in Mexico City in 1920 probably would not have heard mariachi music.
 - B "La Bamba" is the most popular song that mariachi musicians play.
 - C all mariachi musicians are required to have large silver buttons on their uniforms.
 - D there are always twelve to fourteen instruments in a mariachi band or orchestra.

- 18 The selection contains a statement by the narrator that expresses both a fact and an opinion. The statement is that
- A after I joined the band and got my own guitarrón, my mom told me about her uncle, my grandmother's brother.
 - B it's amazing how little the outfit of mariachis has changed in fifty years.
 - C he had been a well-known mariachi musician in Mexico.
 - D but, instead, the music was fascinating.
- 19 The second paragraph is MOSTLY about
- A how well the narrator played the guitarrón.
 - B how little the narrator knew about his Mexican heritage.
 - C why the narrator did not hear about his great-uncle earlier.
 - D why the narrator was an example of history repeating itself.
- 20 The information in the "Mariachi Facts" section is BEST described as
- A clues to understanding the story.
 - B reasons to become a professional musician.
 - C suggestions for further study.
 - D background about the subject of the story.
- 21 Information in the "Mariachi Facts" section helps readers to
- A feel the excitement of the competition at mariachi festivals.
 - B understand why the narrator decided to learn to play the guitarrón.
 - C imagine how the narrator's great-uncle was dressed in the photo.
 - D understand the syncopated rhythms of mariachi music.
- 22 This selection is an example of
- A an interview.
 - B a personal essay.
 - C a reference source.
 - D an informational article.