

# Study Guide For Teachers

## The Villalobos Brothers In *Fusión Mexicana*

Presented by

**Young Audiences**  
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### ABOUT THE PROGRAM

Through the fusion of powerful lyrics and high-energy movements, the Villalobos Brothers use their violins and voices to redefine contemporary Mexican music. Original compositions and arrangements of traditional songs reflect elements of jazz, rock, classical and Mexican folk music, and are blended to deliver a powerful message of love, camaraderie and social justice. The performance delivers a perfect combination of high-octane music, soaring cadences and exceptional virtuosity that awakens the senses and mesmerizes listeners of all ages as students learn of a Mexican folk music heritage that has been passed down through generations.

### LEARNING GOALS

#### **Students will:**

- Explore the musical traditions of Veracruz, Mexico by listening, singing and dancing to the music of the Villalobos Brothers
- Be able to identify the influences and inspiration in the Villalobos Brothers' music
- Hear a trio of instruments and voices working in different combinations

### BACKGROUND INFORMATION FOR STUDENTS

#### **Mexican Folk Music Traditions**

**Fandango:** A social dance and celebration organized by a small town, neighborhood, or even an institution (school or cultural arts center). It is in the fandango that the five elements of son Jarocho come together most significantly:

- Musica (music)
- Versada (lyric or repertory of verses)
- Instrumentos (musical instruments of son Jarocho)
- Zapateado (dance)
- Poesia (reciting of poetry)

These five elements constitute the fandango, but also the important feeling most prominent Jarocho musicians have facility with all five components, but it only takes knowledge of a couple of elements to fully participate in a fandango. The word fandango means “party” or “celebration”.

**Son:** 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 musica, which was the music of the church and the court, and the more derogatory son, which was the “noise” everyone else made. There are only 80 sones in the entire son Jarocho tradition – 80 songs. Part of the tradition is that the musicians create variations or arrangements of the sones, including writing new verses.

**Zapateado:** From the Spanish work for shoe (zapato), the work refers to the foot-stomping style of dance that accompanies Mexican son in its various regional traditions. The dance usually takes place on a wooded platform called a “tarima”, and is typically a couple’s dance.

## BEFORE THE PROGRAM

**Discussion Question:** The Villalobos Brothers are from Veracruz Mexico (locate Veracruz on the map). What are the musical traditions of Veracruz, Mexico?

**Activity:** Using a map, have students locate where their family is from and share a musical tradition from that place.

## AFTER THE PROGRAM

**Mural Reflection:** What is important or delightful to remember about the Villalobos Brothers, their music, and their culture?

On a large paper, create a mural that includes the images and text you felt were important about the Villalobos brothers and their music.

## VOCABULARY WORDS

**Violin:** The smallest and highest-pitched instrument in the string family.

**Trio:** A method of instrumentation or vocalization by three different sounds or voices to make a melodious music or song.

**Arrangement:** Music based on another original piece of music; it may sound very similar or different.

**Tradition:**  
The handing down of statements, beliefs, legends, customs, information, etc., from generation to generation, especially by word of mouth or by practice.

**Son Jarocho:** A regional folk music style from Veracruz, Mexico.

**Fandango:** Led by musicians, poets and dancers, communities gather at this special improvised nighttime celebration where everyone sings and dances: men and women, all generations.

**Zapateado:** From the Spanish word for shoe (zapato), the word refers to the foot-stomping style of dance that accompanies Mexican son in its various regional traditions.

## ARTIST INFORMATION

The Villalobos Brothers were born and raised in Xalapa, Veracruz, Mexico. They spent their childhood listening to their grandmother Cristina Vásquez sing and play guitar and accordion after a day's work. They took up the violin as children and soon learned to sing and play other instruments, including guitar and piano.

The Villalobos Brothers have been acclaimed as one of today's leading Contemporary Mexican ensembles. Their original compositions and arrangements masterfully blend and celebrate the richness of Mexican folk music with the intricate harmonies of jazz and classical music. The Villalobos Brothers deliver an intoxicating brew of brilliance, cadence and virtuosity that awaken the senses and mesmerize the listener.