

AUSTIN
OPERA

MARTÍNEZ & FOGLIA

CRUZAR LA CARA DE LA LUNA

INTERACTIVE
RESOURCE
GUIDE



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AUSTIN OPERA

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WELCOME TO AUSTIN OPERA'S PRODUCTION

CRUZAR LA CARA DE LA LUNA

Welcome to the Interactive Resource Guide for Martinez & Foglia's *Cruzar la Cara de la Luna*, or in English, *To Cross the Face of the Moon*. This opera is a brilliantly told story about an intergenerational family who crosses borders and years of memories to find their way back to each other. As a Mexican American myself, it is so wonderful to see a story hit so close to home on the Long Center Stage.

Before you arrive at the Long Center, we want you to dive into this opera and get a taste of all the work that goes into making the magic happen on-stage. In this TEKS aligned Interactive Resource Guide, you will find a wealth of topics to further explore this piece and discuss with your students. You'll learn about the historical context of our main character's journey to America, hear from a cast member and creative team member, learn more about the beautiful blending of opera and Mariachi, and prepare for your visit to the opera.

Whether this is your first time experiencing an opera or you're an avid fan, this guide is designed to teach you something new, and I know it will enhance your full Access Opera experience.

Enjoy, and we'll see you at the opera!



Andréa Ochoa

Director of Education & Community Impact
Austin Opera



TEKS: TEXAS ESSENTIAL KNOWLEDGE & SKILLS

Overall Expectations: Knowledge and Skills

113.50 Ethnic Studies: Mexican American Studies. Grades 10-12

HISTORY: The student understands the causes and impact of the Mexican American civil rights movement from the 1930s to 1975. The student is expected to:

(A) explain the significance of the following events as turning points relevant to Mexican American history: U.S. entry into World War II, Bracero Program, Longoria Affair, Operation Wetback, Hernández v. Texas, Brown v. Board of Education, Civil Rights Act of 1964, Voting Rights Act of 1965, Farmworkers strike and boycott, and establishment of La Raza Unida Party; and

Overall Expectations: Knowledge and Skills

117.208 Music, Middle School 1, Adopted 2013

HISTORICAL AND CULTURAL RELEVANCE: The student relates music to history, culture, and the world. The student is expected to:

(A) perform music representative of diverse cultures, including American and Texas heritage;

(B) describe written and aurally presented music representative of diverse styles, periods, and cultures;

(C) identify relationships of music concepts to other academic disciplines such as the relationship between music and mathematics, literature, history, and the sciences; and

(D) describe music-related vocations and avocations.

CRITICAL EVALUATION AND RESPONSE: The student listens to, responds to, and evaluates music and musical performance in both formal and informal settings. The student is expected to:

(A) demonstrate appropriate concert and stage etiquette as an informed, actively involved listener and performer during live and recorded performances in a variety of settings;

(B) identify criteria for listening to and evaluating musical performances;

(D) evaluate the quality and effectiveness of musical performances by comparing them to exemplary models; and

(E) demonstrate appropriate cognitive and kinesthetic responses to music and musical performances.



SYNOPSIS

Texas, present day – Laurentino is 75 and very ill. His son Mark serenades him on guitar. Mark's daughter Diana asks about Laurentino's Mexican-born son, Rafael, who has been estranged from Laurentino for decades. Laurentino wakes, but in his delirium mistakes Mark for Rafael. Mark continues to play the guitar while Laurentino remembers the last time he heard this song: his wedding to Renata in Mexico 50 years ago.

Flashing back to that day, the newlyweds Renata and Laurentino enter to great celebration with their friends Lupita and Chucho (*En fragiles alas / On fragile wings*). They dream together of their future (*A cincuenta años de ahora/50 years from now*).

Present-day Laurentino wakes from this beautiful dream crying out for Renata. Diana remains with Laurentino while Mark attempts to make contact with Rafael. Diana comforts Laurentino, joined by the ghost of Renata. They both promise to be with him until the very end (*Siempre estoy aquí/I'm always here*).

Back in Mexico, 50 years ago, Chucho, Laurentino's friend, convinces him to travel to the United States with him for work, promising him a better paycheck and a better life for him and his family (*Diez veces más / Ten times more*). Renata is not pleased with Laurentino's decision to leave Mexico. Laurentino promises to return regularly.

In the present, Mark and Diana contemplate Laurentino's health. Separately, Mark and Rafael agonize over what making contact with each other could mean (*Números / Numbers*).

The scene returns 43 years in the past as Lupita remarks how beautiful Renata's new house is, but Renata confides her anguish over Laurentino's absence (*Un pueblo sin hombres / A town without men*). Renata engages Victor to smuggle her and young Rafael across the border into the U.S. While they embark on the perilous journey across the desert, Laurentino and Chucho talk about how much they miss their families (*Norte y sur / North and south*). On their desert journey, Renata struggles to keep moving, revealing that she is pregnant. She eventually collapses while clutching Rafael. Victor tears Rafael from his dead mother and flees back to Mexico with the boy.

Laurentino learns of the tragedy through Lupita, who tells him Rafael is traumatized and needs time to recover. Laurentino asks where Renata is buried, but she cannot bring herself to tell him the truth. Laurentino continues his search while Lupita voices her longing for Chucho's reassurance (*Di mi nombre / Say my name*).

Present-day Laurentino watches the butterflies outside his window. He tells Diana the story of their miraculous journey and his fascination with them as a boy (*Cruzar la cara de la luna / To cross the face of the moon*). She promises to help bring him back to Mexico after he dies.

Eighteen years after Renata's death, Laurentino finally locates his son. But filled with his own anguish and rage with his father's decision to leave Mexico, Rafael refuses to acknowledge Laurentino as his father. Laurentino persists, observing that Rafael has Renata's eyes (*Los ojos de tu madre / Your mother's eyes*).

In the present, Rafael, contemplating his decision to reunite with his father and his new family, falls into a dream where his mother appears. Together they dance, and Renata urges him to forgive Laurentino (*¿Quieres bailar? / Want to dance?*). Rafael reunites with Laurentino and introduces his daughter, Renata. She assures Laurentino of her love for him (*El padre de mi padre / My father's father*). Reconciled with his family and at peace, Laurentino dies. As Diana promised, the family buries Laurentino in Mexico as the monarch butterflies descend to welcome him home (*Mi hogar / My home*).

MAIN CHARACTERS

Performance Run Time:
Approximately 1 hour and 20 minutes

Laurentino.....	Daniel Noyola*+
Renata.....	Cassandra Zoé Velasco*+
Lupita.....	Claudia Chapa+
Mark.....	Efraín Solís
Diana.....	Lily Guerrero*+
Chucho.....	Daniel Montenegro*
Rafael.....	Efraín Corralejo*
Mariachi Trio.....	Trío Chapultepec*

* Long Center Season debut
+Role debut

CREATIVE TEAM

Conductor.....	Timothy Myers
Director.....	David Radamés Toro
Orchestration.....	David Hanlon
Scenic & Costume Designer.....	Arnulfo Maldonado
Lighting Designer.....	Carolina Ortiz Herrera
Sound Designer.....	C Andrew Mayer
Wig & Makeup Designer.....	Melanie Steele



WHAT IS OPERA?

The term “opera” comes from the Italian word for “work” or “piece.” Opera is a form of storytelling which incorporates music, drama, and design.

Though its origins date back to ancient Greece, the form of opera we are familiar with today started in the late 16th century in Florence, Italy. Many individuals explored trends in the arts, focusing on music and drama in particular. They were unified in their belief that the arts had become over-embellished and that returning to the transparency of the music of the ancient Greeks, which incorporated speech, song, and a chorus to further the plot and provide commentary on the action, would present a more pure, natural, and powerful way to tell stories and express emotions.

Operas have been written on a wide variety of topics, serious and light-hearted, such as mythology, cultural clashes, comedic farce, the celebration of heroes, and children’s stories, just to name a few. Martinez & Foglia’s *Cruzar la Cara de la Luna* is an everyday epic, a story of a family facing tremendous circumstances to come together in the face of loss. The marriage of emotional storytelling through opera and dynamic expression through Mariachi makes for powerful and impactful musical and theatrical experience.

By Makenzie Morgan, Canadian Opera Company





WHAT IS MARIACHI?

Mariachi music is a vibrant and lively form of traditional Mexican music. It's characterized by its lively rhythms, passionately sung melodies, and the iconic sounds of trumpets, violins, guitars, and sometimes harps. This musical style celebrates love, pride, and Mexican culture.

The roots of mariachi music trace back to the rural regions of western Mexico, specifically in the state of Jalisco. Its exact origins are a blend of indigenous music, Spanish influence, and elements from African rhythms brought to Mexico through colonization. Initially played by small, regional groups known as "Mariachi" in the 19th century, the music gradually evolved and gained popularity, eventually becoming a symbol of Mexican identity and culture.

A typical mariachi ensemble consists of several musicians, often dressed in traditional charro suits—colorful outfits with intricate embroidery. Musicians play a variety of instruments such as trumpets, violins, guitars, vihuelas (a small five-string guitar), and guitarróns (a large bass guitar).

The music itself is a fusion of different styles, blending elements of European waltzes, polkas, and the lively rhythms of Mexican folk music. This unique blend creates an infectious and joyful atmosphere, encouraging both musicians and audiences to sing, dance, and celebrate the rich cultural heritage it represents.

To learn more about how opera and mariachi work together, visit page 15.

COMPOSER AND LIBRETTIST

A composer writes the music, and a librettist writes the words. Read more about the composer/librettist team for *Cruzar* below.



JOSÉ "PEPE" MARTÍNEZ

Born: Tecalitlán, Jalisco, June 27, 1941; Died: April 23, 2016

José "Pepe" Martínez was born in 1941, in the southern Jalisco village of Tecalitlán, where he demonstrated a natural talent for music as a young boy. Mariachi music was deeply rooted in his local community and was a primary inspiration to him as a young musician. At the age of 12, Martínez organized his first mariachi band called Mariachi San Andrés with his fellow school mates, naming the group after their neighborhood.

At 19 years old, having performed in several ensembles already, Martínez began to arrange and compose his own music. In 1975, Martínez joined the famed Mariachi Vargas de Tecalitlán and embarked on a journey to write a new chapter in mariachi music, establishing himself as a prominent composer while positioning the ensemble as a leader in the world of mariachi. Martínez had a one-of-a-kind style and was known for his rapid violin ricochets that would ignite an audience. Martínez served as Music Director of Mariachi Vargas from 1975 through his final season with the ensemble in 2014. Commissioned by Houston Grand Opera, *Cruzar la Cara de la Luna* premiered in 2010 and was his first opera. Martínez would go on to collaborate to write *El Pasado Nunca se Termina* (The Past is Never Finished) before he passed away in April of 2016 at the age of 74.



LEONARD FOGLIA

Leonard Foglia is a theater and opera director as well as librettist. He directed the world premieres of *The Diving Bell and the Butterfly*, (Dallas Opera) *Moby Dick* (Dallas, San Francisco, filmed for PBS), *Everest* (Dallas), *Cold Mountain* (Santa Fe), *The End of the Affair* (Houston Grand Opera), *Three Decembers* (HGO), *It's a Wonderful Life* (HGO), and *Stonewall* (New York City Opera). His production of *Dead Man Walking* was produced by New York City Opera and has been seen across the US and has played Teatro Real in Madrid and The Barbican in London.

For Broadway he directed *Master Class* with Zoe Caldwell, Patti LuPone and Audra McDonald, *Wait Until Dark* with Marisa Tomei and Quentin Tarantino, *Thurgood* with Laurence Fishburne (filmed for HBO), *The People in the Picture*, *On Golden Pond* with James Earl Jones, *The Gin Game* with Cecily Tyson and Mr. Jones. Off-Broadway: Anna Deavere Smith's *Notes From The Field* (filmed for HBO) and *Let Me Down Easy* (filmed for PBS).

As an opera librettist, he wrote and directed *Cruzar la Cara de la Luna/To Cross the Face of the Moon* with composer José "Pepe" Martínez which premiered at Houston Grand Opera, *A Coffin in Egypt* with composer Ricky Ian Gordon (HGO), *El Pasado Nunca Se Termina/The Past Is Never Finished*, with composer Martínez which premiered at Lyric Opera of Chicago; *El Milagro Del Recuerdo/The Miracle of Remembering* with composer Javier Martinez (HGO). His "mariachi operas" have played across the country and on three continents.

MEET A KEY PLAYER

Meet the Mezzo with Claudia Chapa



Enjoy this interview with mezzo-soprano, Claudia Chapa!

1. What is your favorite scene in Cruzar?
2. Tell us about your personal connection to this story.
3. What is your favorite musical part/moment of the story?
4. What's your favorite opera?





THE BRACERO PROGRAM

The Bracero Program, which brought millions of Mexican workers to the United States, grew out of a series of bi-lateral agreements between Mexico and the United States that allowed millions of Mexican men to come to the United States to work on short-term, primarily agricultural labor contracts. From 1942 to 1964, 4.6 million contracts were signed, with many individuals returning several times on different contracts, making it the largest U.S. contract labor program.

The Bracero Program was created by executive order in 1942 because many growers argued that World War II would bring labor shortages to low-paying agricultural jobs. On August 4, 1942 the United States concluded a temporary intergovernmental agreement for the use of Mexican agricultural labor on United States farms (officially referred to as the Mexican Farm Labor Program), and the influx of legal temporary Mexican workers began. But the program lasted much longer than anticipated. In 1951, after nearly a decade in existence, concerns about production and the U.S. entry into the Korean conflict led Congress to formalize the Bracero Program with Public Law 78.

The Bracero Program was controversial in its time. Mexican nationals, desperate for work, were willing to take arduous jobs at wages scorned by most Americans. Farm workers already living in the United States worried that braceros would compete for jobs and lower wages.

In theory, the Bracero Program had safeguards to protect both Mexican and domestic workers, including guaranteed payment of at least the prevailing area wage received by native workers; employment for three-fourths of the contract period; adequate, sanitary, and free housing; decent meals at reasonable prices; occupational insurance at employer's expense; and free transportation back to Mexico at the end of the contract. Employers were supposed to hire braceros only in areas of certified domestic labor shortage, and were not to use them as strikebreakers.

In practice, they ignored many of these rules and Mexican and native workers suffered while growers benefited from plentiful, cheap labor. Between the 1940s and mid-1950s, farm wages dropped sharply as a percentage of manufacturing wages, a result in part of the use of braceros and undocumented laborers who lacked full rights in American society.

From the Bracero History Archive. To learn more, visit braceroarchive.org.

BRACERO PHOTO ANALYSIS

Using the photograph below, complete the first two columns in the table (“evidence” and “conclusions”). Once these are completed, [visit this webpage](#) to access the photograph’s descriptive information. With your class or in a small group, fill out the “comparison” column.

How were your conclusions different or the same from the online description? Continue discussions on the Bracero program and the meaning of this photograph.



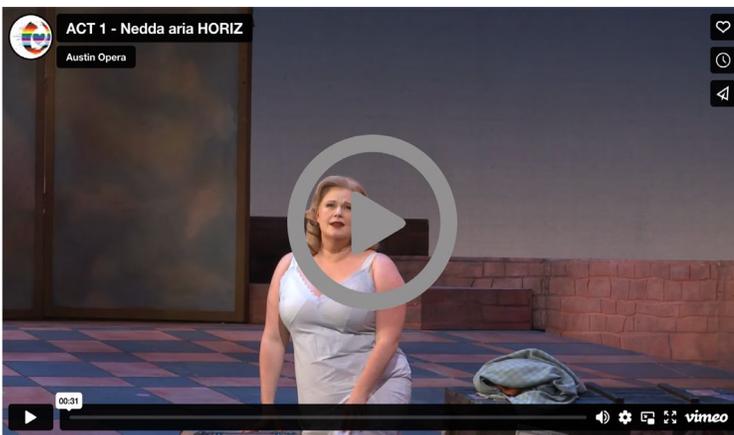
	Evidence (What do you see in the photograph?)	Conclusion (What does that evidence make you think?)	Comparison (How does your conclusion compare to the information in the Web site ?)
Can you guess the decade when this photo was taken?			
What is the setting of the photo?			
Who can you see in the photo?			
Can you identify any specific objects in the photo?			
What actions are taken in the photo?			
Do you think this photo is posed or not?			

This is a shortened version of the [Learning from Photos activity](#) from the Bracero History Archive. To learn more, visit braceroarchive.org.

MARIACHI + OPERA, HOW DOES THIS WORK?

Cruzar la Cara de la Luna was the very first Mariachi Opera—an unprecedented fusion of two rich cultural traditions. Commissioned by Houston Grand Opera, this opera made its debut in 2010, captivating audiences with its innovative blend of mariachi melodies and operatic storytelling. Anthony Freud, the former CEO of Houston Grand Opera, said he was blown away by the impact of his first encounter with a mariachi performance. He called the art form “passionate, intense, emotional, and instantly accessible,” —attributes of opera itself. Opera and Mariachi have a shared ability to stir the soul and transcend cultural boundaries, making them the perfect fit for a musical fusion.

Listen to the three videos below; an opera recording, a mariachi recording, and a recording from *Cruzar*. What similarities and differences do you notice between each of these pieces?



“Stridono Lassu”
from *Pagliacci*
by Leoncavallo.
Performed by Hailey Clark.



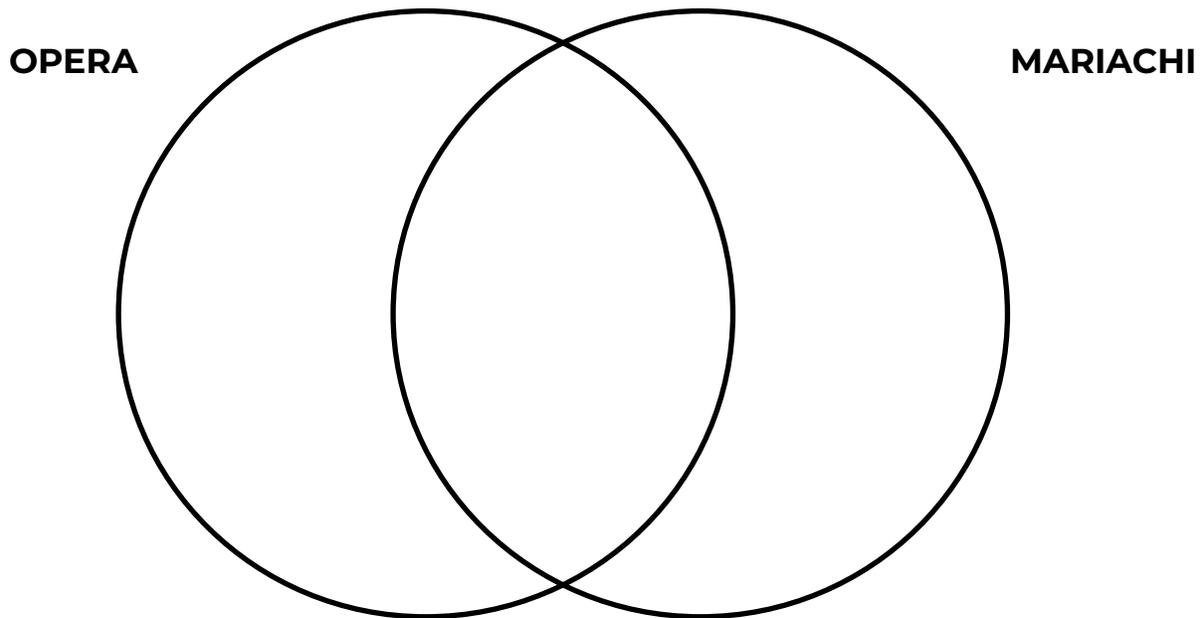
“Ay Jalisco no te Rajes”
by Esperón & Cortázar.
Performed by Trío Chapultepec.



“Los Ojos de tu Madre”
from *Cruzar la Cara de la Luna*
by Martinez & Foglia
Performed by Octavio Moreno and
Efraín Corralejo.

MARIACHI + OPERA ACTIVITY

Below are key words that describe opera and/or mariachi. After listening to the recordings on the previous page, write the words in the Venn diagram that describe mariachi, opera, or both.



Energetic: A lively and spirited vibe, with quick tempos and vibrant rhythms.

Brass Instruments: The use of brass instruments, like trumpets, contributes to the bold and powerful sound.

Melodic: Catchy tunes that are easy to remember and hum along to.

Rhythmic: The rhythmic elements that create an infectious beat that encourages dancing.

Traditional: Deeply rooted in culture and traditions, often featuring traditional folk melodies and storytelling elements.

Harmonious: Layered vocal and instrumental harmonies that create a strong and powerful sound.

Expressive: The singers often use emotive vocal techniques, including strong vibratos and dynamic variations, to convey the emotion in the lyrics.

Colorful: The combination of different instruments and vocal styles creates a rich, colorful tapestry of sound.

Dramatic: Dramatic storytelling, often featuring intense emotions and larger-than-life characters.

String Instruments: Accompanied by a full orchestra, creating a rich and lush musical backdrop for the singers.

Emotive/Passionate: The music and singing are highly emotive, conveying a wide range of emotions from love and joy to tragedy and despair.

Theatricality: Combining music, acting, costumes, and stage design to create a complete storytelling experience.

Dynamic: A wide range of musical dynamics, from soft and delicate passages to powerful and thunderous crescendos.

WHAT TO EXPECT AT THE OPERA

Whether it's your first time at the opera, or you've been more times than you can count, these tips and tricks for your visit will help you feel comfortable and help Access Opera run smoothly.

Final Dress Rehearsal

Because this is a final dress rehearsal, there will still be elements of the production that are in process. There may be stopping to fix mistakes, or singers "marking," which means singing lightly to save their voices. There will also be a tech table in the middle of the audience where the production team, including the director, costume, lighting, and set designers, are working hard to make sure all of the finishing details are in place.

Be quiet and courteous

Be quiet and courteous to the actors on stage. Since a night at the opera is a live theater experience, things work a little differently than they would at a movie theater or school assembly. Since there are singers on stage actively working, our audience needs to be as respectful as possible.

Applaud after arias

Let the singers know that you love the work they're doing. You can say "bravo" for men, "brava" for women, and "bravi" for a group!

No food or drinks allowed

No food or drinks are allowed in the theater. Concessions will be open for purchase before the show and during intermission, and you can enjoy your treats in the lobby.

Don't leave the theater

We lock our doors from the outside during the show, so if you leave for a bathroom break or to get some fresh air, you won't be able to get back to your original seat. Save your breaks for after the show.

Dress like yourself

Whether you wear that dress or suit you've been saving for a special occasion, or you're more comfortable going out in jeans or basketball shorts, dress like yourself at the opera!

and finally...  **Have fun!**