

MEDIA KIT

Isabel Estrada

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Official Author Bio

Short Bio

Isabel Estrada

Isabel Estrada is an author and speaker living in Kalamazoo, Michigan. Isabel grew up the desert borderlands of Arizona, dancing and singing her way through life. As a child immersed in books, she didn't see characters who looked like her on the page, and this desire toward self-identity and self-affirmation is what led her to write stories for today's children and youth. Always a dreamer, she blends her life experiences as an educator with her love of Mexican-American culture and folklore into stories.

Isabel believes that a powerful story helps us make sense of the world. Her mission is to write dynamic, engaging stories and to share them with children everywhere.

Long Bio

Isabel spent much of her professional life as an educator sharing her love of music, dance, and drama with children and youth. These rich, play-filled experiences have inspired the creativity and passion in her writing. An active member of the Society of Children's Book Writers and Illustrators (SCBWI), Isabel Estrada served as the first Equity and Inclusion Chair for Michigan (2019-2021) and is presently serving as Outreach Coordinator (2021-present). She initiated the Kalamazoo Area Shop Talk (K.A.S.T.) where she serves as Co-Coordinator. In 2021, Isabel received the SCBWI Tribute Fund Award for her contributions as an

outstanding volunteer. Her debut picture book, LA MARIACHI, illustrated by Addy Rivera Sonda, was selected for the 2024 ALA RISE Feminist Project Book List. Isabel is a member of Las Musas, a Latinx collective of women who write or illustrate traditional children's literature.

When Isabel's not writing, she loves to dance, cook without recipes, read, sing loudly, play with her two cats, take long walks with her husband, and daydream.

Contact me at isabelestrada.author@gmail.com for a digital file of my author photo.

Book Info

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Order here:

Summary/Reviews

Tuchi longs to join in and play with the school's mariachi band, but it's the 1970s and in her community, mariachi is only for the boys. Still, she hopes--and wishes on Señora Luna. When Tuchi stumbles across her nana's guitarrón, Nana teaches her to play in secret. The music rumbles inside Tuchi like desert thunder. Will Tuchi be ready for the big audition? And will Señora Luna help Tuchi make her wish come true?

- Sleeping Bear Press

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Tuchi is passionate about mariachi, but she's told that it's only for boys. With the help of her grandmother, she's determined to prove that mariachi is for everyone.

- RISE Feminist Book Project

<https://risefeministbooks.wordpress.com/2024/01/15/current-booklist/>

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Tuchi dreams of playing the guitarrón in a mariachi band, but she falters when she learns girls are not allowed in the ensemble.

Hearing the mariachi band playing in the plaza inspires Tuchi. But she's disappointed when her teacher, Mr. Sanchez, tells her she can't play in the school's group: "Mariachi is only for boys." Later, when her grandfather plays with his friends, Tuchi asks to join in but is told that mariachi requires "strength and stamina. It's just for boys." After she finds her grandmother's old instrument, her Nana encourages her by teaching her how to play and emboldening her to stand up for herself. Although Tuchi is unfairly discouraged by the adults she trusts early in the book, her grandmother's mentorship, love, and heirloom guitarrón help Tuchi prove that she belongs in the mariachi band and that girls deserve the same opportunities as boys, especially in the classroom. **Tuchi's grandmother is a wonderful example of a positive role model, and their close and nurturing intergenerational relationship will resonate with many.** Spanish words are sprinkled throughout; a glossary defines them. Characters are brown-skinned and coded as Latine; the focus on mariachi implies a Mexican setting. Music notes weave through the bright, cartoonlike illustrations, evoking Tuchi's passion for mariachi. Musically inclined readers will appreciate backmatter with information on other mariachi instruments, with photos.

Uplifting and harmonious.

- [Kirkus](#) review

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A barrier-breaking mariachi performer inspires her hometown through music in this sensorial picture book. Young Tuchi makes a "songful wish" that she will someday play the "rousing rhythms" and "sweet cinnamon melodies" she dances to in the plaza, but her teacher says that mariachi is solely for boys. Believing "it's time things changed," Tuchi's nana teaches her to play the guitarrón to prove she deserves a spot in the school mariachi ensemble. Estrada imbues the text with sonority through experiential imagery and onomatopoeia. Though the time period

remains unspecified throughout, italicized Spanish phrases and interweaved cultural details animate Tuchi's multigenerational Latinx-cued community, and Sonda's sometimes rigid, color-saturated illustrations conjure a celebratory tone. Back matter describes mariachi instruments.

- [Publishers Weekly](#) reviewed *La Mariachi*

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A love letter to mariachi that calls out its gendered history. Tuchi falls in love with mariachi and how it moves people to sing and dance. However, she's told "Mariachi is only for boys," and is discouraged from playing. She wishes on Señora Luna to help her achieve her dream. Disappointed, the girl hides in a storage room where moonbeams helpfully shine on a guitarrón case holding a traditional bass guitar. It belonged to her nana, who was also discouraged decades ago from pursuing her own desire to play the instrument. Inspired by her grandmother, Tuchi learns to play and blows everyone away at a school tryout. The flap copy mentions that this story is set in the 1970s, but except for a few small details in the art, there's no hint that this takes place during that time period. Sometimes the text is super flowery, and the multiple extended metaphors make this more appropriate for an older audience or as a read-aloud. The rich and colorful illustrations reflect the narrative's effervescence. Spanish is sprinkled throughout, with the translation seamlessly following soon after. A glossary is included with more translations, and a visual glossary featuring photos of female mariachi musicians playing the traditional instruments is also presented in the back matter. **Readers will cheer on Tuchi as she fights against outdated, sexist rules.** She and her family have brown skin. **VERDICT A powerful debut picture book that will inspire all girls to push against the obstacles that keep them from pursuing their passions.**

- [School Library Journal](#) reviewed *La Mariachi*

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This is the story of a little girl, Tuchi, who wants to be a mariachi, but her teacher tells her that the mariachi band is only for boys. Disheartened, she goes home and is told again that girls don't have the strength and stamina to play. Later, in the

storage room at home, Tuchi finds an old guitarrón! She asks her nana about it and learns it is the same instrument Nana learned to play when she was younger. Now, Nana is happy to teach Tuchi how to play. When it comes time to try out for the mariachi ensemble, Tuchi surprises her classmates and teacher with her playing. She is applauded and asked to play again!

I love the inspiration to try something, even though others say you're not capable of doing it. Spanish terms are found throughout the story with a glossary in the back for translation. **The pages are filled with beautiful illustrations.**

- [Youth Services Book Review](#) reviewed *La Mariachi*

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Tuchi longs to join in and play with the school's mariachi band, but it's the 1970s and in her community, mariachi is only for the boys. Still she hopes--and wishes on Señora Luna. When Tuchi stumbles across her nana's guitarrón, Nana teaches her to play in secret. The music rumbles inside Tuchi like desert thunder. Will Tuchi be ready for the big audition? And will Señora Luna help Tuchi make her wish come true?

- Goodreads 4.46 rating

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La Mariachi by Isabel Estrada is a heartwarming and inspiring tale that will resonate with young readers who love stories about perseverance, self-expression, and the power of following one's dreams, making it a perfect fit for kids who enjoy uplifting and empowering stories about overcoming obstacles and believing in oneself.

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- Storygraph 4.46 rating