THE EXCITEMENT OF DANCE, MUSIC, THEATRE AND STORYTELLING COMES TO YOU!

AMERICANA UNLIMITED

Beatrix Potter
LET’S GET STARTED!

Enclosed is a packet of information about the scheduled program. Please review all of the documents carefully, as they are the materials you will need to sponsor a successful program.

THE DAILY SCHEDULE

It is important that the daily schedule be maintained as specified on the confirmation document. If special circumstances occur once the project has begun, notify Music Center staff as soon as possible. Changes may be accommodated pending artist availability (which can be limited). We request that all participants be seated in the performance area and ready to begin at the scheduled times.

STUDENT SUPERVISION AT SCHOOL SITES

In accordance with California law, The Music Center requires that a classroom teacher be present with students at all times. It is expected that teachers will attend events with their class and actively participate in the learning experience.

YOUR FINANCIAL ARRANGEMENTS

About a week after the performance, you’ll receive an invoice in the mail. You have 30 days to pay upon receipt of the invoice. We do ask that you wait until you receive the invoice before sending payment.

ARTIST INTRODUCTION & STAGING REQUIREMENTS

Please introduce the artist with the enclosed introduction. There is also specific information you will need to prepare for the arrival of each artist. Please give the tech sheet to the school personnel in charge of setting up the performance area well in advance of the scheduled dates. Be sure to have ready any equipment which may be required.

CURRICULUM CONNECTION FOR CLASSROOM TEACHERS

These pre- and post-event classroom activities are designed to enhance the understanding and enjoyment of the program. Please duplicate this preparation material and distribute to all teachers whose students will be attending the event to allow them to fully prepare the students.

PRESS RELEASE AND POSTER

A pre-made press release is available should you wish to publicize the event. A premade poster is also included so that your school community can be aware of the upcoming event.

We applaud your commitment to arts education and look forward to working with you.

If you have any questions, please don’t hesitate to call us at 213-972-4310.
"I would like to introduce today's performance which is presented by The Music Center of Los Angeles County. Many of you have heard “The Tale of Peter Rabbit.” Do you know who wrote it? Her name was Beatrix Potter. Today we are going to imagine that she is here with us right now. Later, you can even ask her questions. So, welcome an actor named Judith Helton who is playing that famous writer and painter, Miss Beatrix Potter.

Feel free to encourage the adult members of your audience to share the experience on social media! Tag us on Facebook, Twitter, or Instagram at @MusicCenterLA and we might repost your photos!
TECHNICAL REQUIREMENTS

SPACE
- 12’ wide x 8’ deep minimum
- Portable stages must be sturdy, level and securely lashed with steps leading up to the stage

SURFACE
- A clean and safe freshly mopped (not waxed) floor for performing
- Irregularities covered with tape
- Extraneous clutter removed

DRESSING AREA
- One private dressing area (not a bathroom) must be ready upon artist’s arrival

EQUIPMENT
- Have the following set up, cleared and ready before the artist arrives: one 6’ wide table

ARRIVAL
- Artist will arrive 1 hour before start time
- Artist will need to get into costume and set up the performance area

PARKING
- One space near the venue for loading and unloading

ASSISTANCE
- Please have a school representative ready to welcome the performers and to stay and help as needed; this representative should have access to any doors and lights and power in the performance area

START TIME
- Please prepare to start the program on time
- Students should be in the venue, seated and ready to begin at the listed times
AMERICANA UNLIMITED—Beatrix Potter

ART FORM: Storytelling/Historical Character
STYLE: Contemporary
CULTURE: Western European

MEET THE ARTIST:

Actress Judith Helton literally steps into the past when she goes to work. Since 1976, she has brought history to life with her intriguing portrayals of women of accomplishment and artistic talent. Her versatile repertoire of one-woman shows consists of three from American history - First Lady Abigail Adams, Gold Rush entertainer Lotta Crabtree, pioneer author Laura Ingalls Wilder - and England’s author/illustrator, Beatrix Potter. Each portrayal is meticulously researched from an historical perspective. Ms. Helton’s professional theatre credits include work in resident acting companies in Baltimore, Milwaukee, Houston and San Diego. Internationally she has performed at the Edinburgh, Scotland “World Theatre Festival,” and in Dublin and Cork, Ireland. Ms. Helton’s commitment to authenticity in her performances has led her to master such specialized skills as spinning, weaving, banjo playing and antique costume construction. She so truly ‘becomes’ the women she plays, that it is little wonder when leaving her home she is asked by neighbors, “Who are you today?”

PREPARING FOR THE EXPERIENCE:

The Tale of Peter Rabbit began as an illustrated letter to a little boy, Noel Moore. When Noel’s mother, Annie, was twenty, she had been a governess to Beatrix Potter who was 17. Two years later, Annie married and moved away, but the two women kept in close touch. When five-year old Noel became ill, Beatrix Potter sent him a picture letter all about Peter Rabbit and his adventures in Mr. McGregor’s garden. The character of Peter was based on Beatrix’s pet rabbit, Peter Piper. The now famous letter was written on September 4, 1893. A few years after the Peter Rabbit letter had been sent to Noel, it occurred to Beatrix Potter that she might make a little book of the story. She wrote to ask if Noel had kept that letter, and, if so, could she borrow it? Noel had in fact kept the letter and was happy to lend it to her.

Beatrix Potter rewrote the story in a stiff-covered exercise book and prepared 42 pen-and-ink drawings to illustrate it. It was called The Tale of Peter Rabbit and Mr. McGregor’s Garden, by H.B. Potter. In addition to the black-and-white drawings there was a colored frontispiece, showing Peter in bed, and his mother, Mrs. Rabbit, giving him a cup of chamomile tea.

ABOUT THE PERFORMANCE:

Ms. Helton’s portrayal of Beatrix Potter illuminates the life of the author/illustrator who gave us such beloved stories as “The Tale of Peter Rabbit” and those of some of his friends, Benjamin Bunny, Mrs. Tiggy Winkle, Jemima Puddle-Duck and Mr. Jeremy Fisher. The context for the performance is a visit with the famous literary figure. Ms. Potter shares some biographical information and tells a selection of her stories. The audience also learns "the tales behind the tales"—the real animals, people and incidents which inspired the characters and plots. Ms. Helton’s costume is a copy of Beatrix Potter’s wedding garb, representing her as she looked on her wedding day in 1913 at age 47. That event marked both an end to Beatrix’s life with her parents and her creative writing career. She embarked on a new life with her lawyer husband, Mr. William Heelis, devoting herself to him and their country property, "Hill Top Farm.”

Canon Rawnsley, a friend of the family and a founding member of The National Trust, became interested in Beatrix Potter’s idea to make a book out of this story letter. He offered to help her find a publisher and to submit the manuscript on her behalf. In 1900 the story was sent to at least six publishers, all of whom rejected it. The following year the undaunted Beatrix withdrew eleven pounds from her savings and published 250 copies herself. The little tale became immensely popular among her family and friends. When she resubmitted the tale to publishers Frederick Warne & Co., they accepted it and still publish her works today.
DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

• What kind of childhood did Beatrix Potter have?
• How did Beatrix Potter’s life influence her art?
• If you look at the illustrations in her books, what do the clothing choices of the characters tell you about their personalities? Cite examples.
• What are your favorite Beatrix Potter stories? Why?
• Do you have a pet or favorite animal that you could use as a character around which to create a story? Try telling a story about this animal and then write it down.

FRAMEWORK FOCUS—SCIENCE:

Beatrix Potter was dedicated to preserving animal habitats and the land’s natural beauty. She willed her home and farm to a nature conservancy organization called the National Trust, in Briton. This is an organization concerned with the preservation of historic buildings and monuments and areas of the countryside of great beauty in England, Wales, and Northern Ireland. It was founded in 1895 and incorporated by act of parliament in 1907. Southern California is home to many different species of animals and plants.

Brainstorm a list of all the animals, birds, fish, reptiles, flowers, trees, etc. that are found in this area. Are their habitats threatened? Are any on the list of endangered species? Discuss ways that your class can support environmental causes to save our parks, beaches and wilderness areas from over-development and pollution. Contact the Sierra Club, the World Wildlife Fund, the American Forestry Association or the groups listed below for additional information.

The Nature Conservancy has acquired and preserved 92 million acres around the world. Their mission is to preserve plants, animals and natural communities by protecting the lands and waters they need to survive. nature.org

Heal the Bay is dedicated to cleaning up the waters and beaches of the Santa Monica Bay. Through their work, sewage dumping has decreased, drainage has been cleaned up, and endangered species have returned to our coastal waters. healthebay.org

ACTIVITIES TO ENHANCE THE EXPERIENCE:

★ Look through magazines and select a plant or animal that appeals to you. Complete a detailed life-study drawing of a plant or animal. Beatrix Potter observed and drew her pets, farm animals, and various wildflowers and plants in country gardens. Ask students to pay particular attention to proportion and color so that they draw a realistic picture of their subject, rather than one that is impressionistic or stylized.

● The “Tale of Peter Rabbit” began as a ‘picture letter.’ Write an illustrated letter to someone, telling them about a family pet or favorite animal. Research Beatrix Potter’s original letter to Noel Moore.

■ Research an author of your choice and perform a two-minute characterization as your literary figure. Create a costume, adding a wig, mustache, eyeglasses or jewelry to compete the portrait. Read brief excerpts of your character’s published works as part of your presentation.

◆ Create an original story based on first-hand observation of an animal subject. Students should give human traits to their animal characters as Beatrix Potter did. Create characters with distinct personalities, noting their habits, friendships, joys, fears, secrets, etc.

◆ Choose two or three Beatrix Potter tales and discuss morals or lessons taught by the stories. Describe how Beatrix Potter’s animal characters relate truths which pertain to humankind.

◆ Divide the class into cooperative groups to dramatize a Beatrix Potter tale. Cast one student in each group as the narrator who will thread the story along, and set up the scenes to be acted out. Improvise dialogue and action. Select simple props or costume pieces to visually bring the stories to life.

SUGGESTED RESOURCES:


Lane, Margaret. The Tale of Beatrix Potter. Frederick Warne & Co. Ltd., 2011.

Tales of Beatrix Potter, told by Nadia, Blackstone Audiobooks, 2007.


LEGEND

VISUAL AND PERFORMING ARTS CONTENT STANDARD STRANDS

★ Artistic perception
● Creative expression
■ Historical & cultural context
◆ Aesthetic valuing
◊ Connections, Relations, Applications

Author: Barbara Leonard. Edited by Susan Cambigue-Tracey. © The Music Center of Los Angeles County www.musiccenter.org/ontour @MusicCenterLA
AND THE MUSIC CENTER ANNOUNCE

AMERICANA UNLIMITED TO PERFORM ON

and The Music Center today announced the upcoming Americana Unlimited performance. As part of the school’s continuing efforts to enrich its curriculum and its students’ educational experience, the school will present a special performance of Americana Unlimited. The performance is presented by The Music Center’s education department which provides many offerings including live performances, classroom workshops, scholarship and training programs, online arts curriculum, on-campus events and professional development.

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The Music Center on Tour is the premiere resource for high-quality performing arts performances in Los Angeles County. For more than 35 years, schools and communities have benefited from the program’s roster of diverse and compelling performing artists who serve as models of artistic excellence, inspire creative thinking and introduce young audiences to the world’s diverse cultural traditions. Music Center artists represent and celebrate the finest artistic contribution of the world’s cultures – from the colorful regional dances of Mexico and the exquisite music of the China, to the pulsating rhythms of Brazil and the golden harmonies of 20th century America.

Schools can choose from more than 70 performances in music, dance, theatre and storytelling from an internationally acclaimed roster of artists seen across the globe in films, theaters, concert halls, television shows and museums.

About The Music Center
As L.A.’s performing arts destination, The Music Center is L.A.’s home to the world’s greatest artistic programs and events. With four iconic theaters and four renowned resident companies – Center Theatre Group, the LA Master Chorale, the LA Opera and the LA Philharmonic – and recognized for its illustrious dance programming, Glorya Kaufman Presents Dance at The Music Center, The Music Center is a destination where audiences find inspiration in the very best of live performance, as well as nationally recognized arts education and participatory arts experiences. With The Music Center On Location, the non-profit performing arts organization brings events and activities to locations outside of its Downtown Los Angeles campus. The Music Center also programs and manages Grand Park, a 12-acre adjacent greenspace, with year-round free programming. For more information, visit musiccenter.org Follow The Music Center on Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram (@MusicCenterLA).

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For more information, please contact The Music Center at 213-972-3338. Members of the media are welcome to cover this performance. Please contact The Music Center prior to sending a reporter or photographer to the school.
THE MUSIC CENTER PRESENTS

AMERICANA UNLIMITED

DATE: ___________________ TIME: ___________________

SCHOOL: ___________________
ARTS INTEGRATION PARTNERSHIPS

The Music Center’s teaching artists work in the classroom facilitating student learning and modeling effective instructional strategies for teachers. Essential skills and vocabulary in music, theater, dance, or visual art are connected to universal themes and integrated with other content areas.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Our Professional Development targets arts integration strategies for K-12 teachers in dance, music, theatre, and visual arts. Teachers learn creative and effective approaches for integrating the arts into their content areas. Additionally, The Music Center offers the Summer Arts Studio for Educators. This program consists of events tailored for classroom teachers, arts teachers and educators.

STUDENT MATINEE PERFORMANCES

Each year Glorya Kaufman Presents Dance at The Music Center offers free student matinee dance performances. All performances include a teacher orientation session and curriculum guide for students.

THE BLUE RIBBON CHILDREN’S FESTIVAL

The Blue Ribbon Children’s Festival, designed specifically for fifth grade students, is an annual admission-free program at The Music Center. Students experience a live professional performance at a world-class performing arts center, then gather together to perform a short choreographed dance inspired by the production.

VERY SPECIAL ARTS FESTIVAL

The Very Special Arts Festival is an annual admission-free event celebrating the artistic achievements of students with disabilities and their mainstream peers. The festival features student and professional performances on two stages, visual and performing arts workshops, and a student art exhibit created around a central theme.

SPOTLIGHT

Much more than a competition, Spotlight is a scholarship and training program, which encourages personal and artistic growth, while exploring new possibilities in the arts.

ARTSOURCE®

The Music Center’s Artsource® curriculum is designed to bring the expressive world of the arts into classrooms. The materials are available online free of cost.

OTHER ON CAMPUS MUSIC CENTER OFFERINGS:

Glorya Kaufman Presents Dance at The Music Center, Dance Downtown, Symphonian Campus Tours, Grand Park