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

AMERICANA UNLIMITED

Laura Ingalls Wilder
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. This performance features actress Judith Helton's portrayal of Laura Ingalls Wilder. If you've ever read "Little House on the Prairie" or any of the Little House books by Laura Ingalls Wilder, then you've shared in the adventures of Laura's pioneer childhood. Imagine being in a log cabin surrounded by wolves or riding in a covered wagon. Today you will meet an actress named Judith Helton playing the famous author who actually lived these experiences. Please welcome author Laura Ingalls Wilder!"
**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 3' 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—Laura Ingalls Wilder

ART FORM: Storytelling/Historical Character

STYLE: Contemporary

CULTURE: North American

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:

Thousands upon thousands of emigrant wagons traveled through the great central prairies and plains before pioneers thought of actually settling there. The vast region, stretching from the Missouri River to the Rockies and from the Canadian border to the Texas Panhandle, abounded in reasons for pressing on. It was treeless, matted with dense sod in its eastern reaches, arid farther west, and everywhere possessed of a climate that ran to brutal extremes of hot and cold. Summer droughts, when the thermometer rose well above 100 degrees and hovered there for weeks on end, could char a pioneer’s corn crop as effectively as a blowtorch. In winter, when temperatures sometimes plunged to 40 degrees below zero, horrendous snowstorms struck so suddenly that a man might lose his way between his house and barn and freeze to death.

After the Civil War, Abraham Lincoln signed the Homestead Act of 1862 into law. It stated that citizens “who had never borne arms against the U.S. government” could file a claim for 160 acres of surveyed government land. During the next five years they must “improve” the claim by building a structure and cultivating the land. At the end of that time the land was theirs, free and clear, for a small fee of less than $15.00. The Ingalls’ obtained their farm in Dakota Territory (now South Dakota) in this way, as discussed in Laura’s books, “thus fulfilling Pa Ingalls’ dream.” In the late 1870s, after the choicest lands had been filled, settlers spread out into the surrounding prairie. In the absence of wood and stone, the only building material for a house was sod that was stripped from the soil. The only fuel was the dried manure of buffalo or cows. Droughts and grasshopper plagues brought havoc to crops. Finally, settlers moved westward into the semi-arid uplands of Colorado, Wyoming and the Dakotas.

These pioneers would not merely survive; they would convert the bleak expanse into some of the most productive farmland the world has ever known. As one young Nebraska settler wrote to his mother back East: “Ma, you can see as far as you please here and almost every foot in sight can be plowed.” In only two decades, more new U.S. terrain was brought under cultivation than in the previous two and a half centuries.

ABOUT THE PERFORMANCE:

Miss Wilder wrote, “I wanted children now and in the future to understand more about the beginnings of things -- what it was that made America .. I understood that my own life represented a period of American history. I had seen the whole frontier: the woods, the Indian country, the frontier towns, homesteaders and farmers... I realized that I had seen and lived it all.” Fortunately, Laura Ingalls Wilder preserved her stories for all time in the “Little House” series of books. Judith Helton brings this famous author to life by portraying Laura, telling stories of her pioneer girlhood on the prairie. Tales are told of covered wagons, sod houses, homesteading, blizzards, wild animals and plagues of grasshoppers. Through all adversity, the courage, laughter, strong family ties and love endure. Photographs and maps help you visualize the real people and places the stories are based on. After the performance students can ask questions and learn little known facts about “Laura’s” 90 years of life. Laura Ingalls Wilder’s visit will be remembered for a long time to come.
DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

- Who has read any of the Laura Ingalls Wilder books? Who has seen any of the TV series, “Little House on the Prairie?” What stands out for you?
- Think about the stories you heard in the performance. Which one was your favorite? Why?
- Have you ever visited any of the states where the Ingalls family lived? (Wisconsin, Kansas, Minnesota, South Dakota, Missouri). Find those states on a map. How do they differ from California?
- What kinds of houses did people live in on the American prairie in the 1870s and 1880s? Find pictures of sod houses, dug-outs and log cabins. How were they constructed? (See Little House on the Prairie by Laura Ingalls Wilder and also research the Internet.)
- What kind of hardships did pioneers face on the frontier? How did people survive the harsh winters? What happened if they ran out of firewood? (See Little House in the Big Woods and The Long Winter by Laura Ingalls Wilder.

FRAMEWORK FOCUS—SOCIAL SCIENCE:

Nothing affected the outcome of the pioneers’ journey more directly than the wagons that had to carry them across thousands of miles of wilderness. A wagon had to be light enough not to place undue strain on the oxen that pulled it, yet strong enough not to break down under loads of as much as 2,500 pounds.

Find diagrams of a "prairie schooner" showing its various parts: the wagon bed, the undercarriage and the cover. Have students imagine they are pioneers going on a wagon train journey. Have them make lists of the various types of provisions they would need on the trip: bedding and tent supplies; cooking utensils; medicine and notions; weaponry; tools; food; clothing; luxuries.

Tell students they are allowed to take only two things of their own, such as a toy, doll, book or a musical instrument. What would they select? Why? Have them note their preparation lists in a diary and write entries as Laura Ingalls Wilder did from points along the trails.

ACTIVITIES TO ENHANCE THE EXPERIENCE:

- Discuss the “five W’s” used in the performance (who, what, where, when and why). For each featured story about the Ingalls family, make a list identifying the central characters, the location, the time frame, and the main idea or plot.
- Create frontier characters and role-play situations that may have been typical of their lives.

Suggestions for characters: blacksmith, pioneer mother, sheriff, railroad worker, Cheyenne Indian, rancher, etc.

Suggestions for settings: on the wagon train, in town, around the campfire, at the schoolhouse, at a fort, in the dug-out, etc.

Suggestions for situations: packing to leave home and bidding good-bye to neighbors and friends; keeping watch on the wagon train at night; hunting for food and water along the journey; a day of rest or festivities at a fort or town on the way; braving a winter storm; building a sod house; digging a well, etc.

- Research and cook an authentic frontier recipe such as "Johnny Cake." Preparing meals was very hard work. Describe how pioneer housewives had to obtain ingredients such as cornmeal (stoneground) or buttermilk (churned). Where and how did they get sweeteners like maple syrup and honey?
- Discuss the impact that the Laura Ingalls Wilder stories had on you. Compare and contrast the kind of hardships that the Ingalls family endured with the challenges you face today in your own life. How did you respond to the simplicity of their possessions and their forms of entertainment?
- When the day’s journey on the wagon train was over, the campfire was the gathering place for weary travelers. Here they relaxed, swapped stories, sang songs and dreamed of the new lives they would find. Hold a classroom “campfire.” Ask students to sit together in a circle as they share a piece of family history, a favorite song they can sing or play on the guitar or harmonica, a fable or story with a lesson, a joke or funny memory or some sage advice.

SUGGESTED RESOURCES:


School Contact Name: ____________________________
Phone: ____________________________

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

PROGRAM SUPPORT PROVIDED BY: