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

DAVID PRATHER
Star-Spangled Poetry
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. This performance is titled “Star-Spangled Poetry,” and it features actor and author David Prather. Mr. Prather will perform great American poems that reflect the ideals of our nation - liberty and equality for all. Please welcome David Prather!"

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
- 10’ wide x 10’ deep minimum
- Portable stages must be sturdy and securely lashed, with steps leading up to the stage

SURFACE
- Freshly mopped (not waxed)
- Irregularities covered with tape
- Extraneous clutter removed

OUTDOOR PERFORMANCES
- Shaded
- Protected from wind, traffic and playground noise
  - Good acoustics
- Sound system with one microphone stand is required

EQUIPMENT
- One microphone with a stand
  - Sound system
- One 4-6 foot table

ARRIVAL
- Artist will arrive thirty minutes prior to the scheduled start time to prepare and set up

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

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
DAVID PRATHER — Star Spangled Poetry

ART FORM: Theatre/Storytelling
STYLE: Contemporary
CULTURE: North American

MEET THE ARTIST:

David Prather, a charismatic actor and author, has earned a Princeton education, as well as training at the American Conservatory Theatre in San Francisco, California. Combining all that he learned, he has utilized his experiences and knowledge to create original works for young audiences. Whether performing his school assembly programs in multi-purpose rooms, or sharing the stage with Julie Andrews at Walt Disney Concert Hall, Mr. Prather uses improvisatory humor and wit to engage and entertain his audience. As “Cap’n Dave,” he delighted thousands over many years as the host of “Summer Sounds” at the Hollywood Bowl. He has performed with the L.A. Phil, the Pacific and San Francisco Symphonies, as well as at the Getty Center, the Skirball Cultural Center and other arts institutions. At The Music Center, he has performed Shakespeare at the Mark Taper and hosted concerts with the Los Angeles Philharmonic.

ABOUT THE PERFORMANCE:

David Prather’s “Star-Spangled Poetry” is a theatrical interpretation of the idea and ideals of America as expressed by our nation’s greatest poets. Starting with Francis Scott Key’s stirring “Star-Spangled Banner” and the War of 1812, the show sets iconic poems in their historical context and then renders them dramatically. Against the backdrop of a torn American flag, Mr. Prather becomes Key, witnessing the British bombardment of Fort McHenry while composing his immortal lines. But, he also portrays Ferdinand Durang, a famed actor of the day, singing our anthem atop a tavern chair. In another scene, Mr. Prather costumes himself as Lady Liberty before mounting a pedestal to deliver the famous lines of Emma Lazarus’ sonnet: “...give me your tired, your poor, your huddled masses yearning to breathe free.” The Declaration of Independence’s promise of “life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness” is explored through the works of great poets from Walt Whitman to Allen Ginsberg. Through the works of our nation’s poets we experience the evolution of the principle that “all Men are created equal.”

With irony, humor and passion, artists across two centuries have defined and defended the democratic promise of the American dream.

PREPARING FOR THE EXPERIENCE:

“The New Colossus,” a poem by Emma Lazarus, is carved on the pedestal of the Statue of Liberty, an icon of American culture. The statue, whose original name was “Liberty Enlightening the World,” was meant to celebrate the centennial of that auspicious date, July 4th, 1776 when America declared its independence from England. Accordingly, in her right hand Lady Liberty holds a torch; in her left hand rests a tablet, upon which is inscribed a date in Roman numerals: July IV MDCCCLXXVI. Through her poem, Lazarus would come to redefine the meaning of the giant figure in New York harbor as a “mother of exiles.” Sadly, she would not live to see its completion. Yet her immortal words gave expression to the reality of the millions of “huddled masses yearning to breathe free” who poured through America’s “golden door” in the late 19th and early 20th centuries.

Another amateur poet, Francis Scott Key, captured the essence of the other enduring symbol of our nation, “the star-spangled banner” - our flag. Despite the widely-believed story of Betsy Ross sewing the first flag at the request of George Washington, the flag as we know it today did not come into being until after America had declared its independence. In fact, in the early stages of the Revolutionary War the most common flag flown in the colonies consisted of thirteen red and white stripes with the British Union in the upper right-hand box (canton). It was not until 1777 that the Continental Congress, in the midst of war, passed a flag resolution stating:

“Resolved, That the flag of the thirteen United States be thirteen stripes alternate red and white; that the union be thirteen stars, white in a blue field, representing a new Constellation.”

There is no historical record why stars were chosen, or even what congress meant by the phrase “a new constellation.” It is clear that the number ‘thirteen’ signified the original colonies. However, by 1794 the newly independent United States had grown with the addition of Vermont and Kentucky, and a new flag resolution increased the number of stars, as well as stripes, to fifteen. This flag, which flew over Fort McHenry during the War of 1812, and which inspired Francis Scott Key’s national anthem, was already outdated at the time. In 1818, a Flag Act resolved the problem of a growing nation by stipulating that while the stripes would revert to the original thirteen in number, an additional star would be added to the canton for each new state as it was admitted to the union. And thus was born the “star-spangled banner that yet waves o’er the “land of the free, and the home of the brave.”
DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

- Why do we sing the “The Star-Spangled Banner” before baseball games and other sporting events like the Super Bowl? Is this appropriate? Give reasons to support your opinion.

- In his poem, “I Hear America Singing,” Walt Whitman enumerates the “varied carols” he heard in the 19th Century. What are some of the contemporary “carols” (modified from choral singing) heard in America today?

- What does the Declaration of Independence’s promise of “the pursuit of happiness” mean to you?

- What does it mean to be patriotic? What is the definition of “patriotic”? (expressing devotion to, and showing vigorous support of one’s country) How do the various poets in the show demonstrate their patriotism?

- How have the poets in this show helped to expand the notion that “all Men are created equal?”

ACTIVITIES TO ENHANCE THE EXPERIENCE:

- Have students select a patriotic song, or poem, and research the era in which it was written. Discuss how the work reflects the author’s feelings about that historic moment. Read the poem aloud reflecting the author’s sentiment.

- Have students listen to patriotic music from different wars: a Sousa march or the Confederate ballad “When Johnny Comes Marching Home”; George M. Cohan’s WWI hawkey, “Over There”; Irving Berlin’s WWII hymn “God Bless America”; Jimi Hendrix’ incendiary guitar version of “Star- Spangled Banner” at Woodstock.

- Our national anthem states: “Then conquer we must, when our cause it is just; and this be our motto: in God is our trust.” Discuss this in terms of American foreign policy from the doctrine of Manifest Destiny to discuss current international conflicts. You can adapt this concept for younger grades.

- Have students research their own genealogy to share with the class or a partner. Create improvisations of immigrants arriving in America, or scenes of immigrants passing the Statue of Liberty as “The New Colossus” is recited.

- Francis Scott Key borrowed the tune for the “Star-Spangled Banner,” as did Woody Guthrie for “This Land is Your Land.” Today, we call this practice “sampling”; ask students to adapt the lines/lyrics from one of the poems in the show to a familiar song.

FRAMEWORK FOCUS—LANGUAGE ARTS:

Poets reflect their historic era, as well as their individual artistic temperament, in both the form and content of their work. Francis Scott Key expressed his revolutionary sentiments in a traditional metric scheme (a systematic plan). Emma Lazarus appealed to America’s radical promise within the formal corset of a sonnet. Walt Whitman, a true renegade in his personal life as well as his poetry, uprooted traditional notions of form by using free verse to express his vision of America.

Ask students to render the rhyming and metric verses of the “Star-Spangled Banner” or “The New Colossus” in free verse. This can be an individual or collaborative assignment; different clusters of students might tackle one of the four stanzas of the national anthem. Modern language can be employed to clarify meaning, e.g., “In the dawn’s early light...” “might become “Tell me what you see as the sun rises...” or “From her beacon hand glows worldwide welcome” something like “The torch she holds shines its light on all.” Have students read their “translations” aloud, and discuss the merits of the new against the original.

SUGGESTED RESOURCES:


AND THE MUSIC CENTER ANNOUNCE
DAVID PRATHER TO PERFORM ON ________________________

________________________ and The Music Center today announced the upcoming David Prather 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 David Prather. 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.

Dubbed the “Maker of Merry” by the L.A. Times, actor David Prather has shared his lively blend of improvisation, verbal wit and physical comedy with audiences from schools to concert halls across California. Whether appearing with Julie Andrews at Disney Hall as host of the L.A. Phil’s Holiday Sing Along, or engaging an assembly of rapt students in a multi-purpose room, Prather makes it his mission to entertain and enlighten. He has delighted audiences at the Hollywood Bowl (where he appeared for ten seasons as ’Cap’n Dave’ of Summer Sounds) and in family programs at the Getty, Skirball, and Autry Museums. Mr. Prather is a graduate of Princeton University and the American Conservatory Theatre.

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

DAVID PRATHER

DATE: ______________________ TIME: ______________________

SCHOOL: ____________________

musiccenter.org/ontour
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: