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

PAUL MORSE PRODUCTIONS

Letters to Harriet Tubman
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. Imagine that you have traveled back in time to the year 1902. Pretend that you have made a journey from California all the way to the little town of Auburn in upstate New York. You are now sitting in front of the house of Harriet Tubman, a woman who endured many hardships in her mission to set her people free from slavery. Please welcome the Paul Morse Production of Letters to Harriet Tubman!"

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!
SPACE
• 15' wide x 15' deep minimum
• Portable stages must be sturdy, level and securely lashed

EQUIPMENT
• 1 or 2 standing microphones
• Sound system with an amplifier and speakers will be required

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

ARRIVAL
• 15-30 minutes prior to the scheduled start time to prepare and set up

OUTDOOR PERFORMANCE
If the performance must be held outdoors, the following conditions must be met:
• Performance space must be covered so that the artists are shaded and protected from wind and excess traffic or playground noise
• Cannot perform on wet grass
• Audience cannot exceed 300 people

PARKING
• One space close to the venue for loading and unloading

ASSISTANCE
• Please have a school representative ready to welcome the performers and to stay and help as needed.

DRESSING AREA
One private dressing room will be 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
PAUL MORSE PRODUCTIONS: Letters to Harriet Tubman

ART FORM: Storytelling/Historical Character
STYLE: Traditional
CULTURE: North American

MEET THE ARTIST:

Paul Morse (author, producer) was a composer, lyric writer and author of musical theatre works for the stage. A recipient of numerous awards for playwriting and musical theatre, his works have been produced both nationally and internationally. He participated actively in the production of theatre for youth projects and worked as an artist in residence at North Carolina A&T State University and the Theatre of Creativity. He was a writer, director and teacher for such organizations as Los Angeles Unified Schools, The L.A. Children’s Museum, Performing Tree and The Music Center. During the 1980s he wrote and produced ten plays and musicals which toured throughout Southern California. In 1986, “Children of the Universe” had an international premiere at the Edinburgh Fringe Festival in Scotland. Letters to Harriet Tubman, his most popular work, was performed in Washington D.C., with Mr. Morse playing the role of Jeffrey.

Since the death of Mr. Morse, Paul Morse Productions has continued to present the compelling, dynamic performances for young audiences for which Paul was known.

ABOUT THE PERFORMANCE:

Letters to Harriet Tubman is a series of vignettes highlighting the contributions of “the General” - the nickname fondly bestowed on Miss Harriet Tubman by her close friend, the famous abolitionist John Brown. Based on historical incidents and written with meticulous attention to authenticity, the performance casts the audience as participants: they play “visitors.” The time is 1902; the location is Auburn, New York, and the audience is sitting on the front porch of Harriet Tubman. Ms. Tubman, now 80 years old, is entertaining a group of visitors as she reminisces about the heroic adventures of her life. Students learn about the events and politics of the era as Ms. Tubman, helped by her neighbor, Jeffrey Taylor, sing songs and recount stories of slavery, civil war and the struggle for freedom.

PREPARING FOR THE EXPERIENCE:

Harriet Ross Tubman was born into slavery in 1821. Her parents, Benjamin Ross and Harriet Green, named her Araminta, but she later changed her name to Harriet. She was one of ten children, several of whom were taken away in chains and sold to other plantation masters. A quiet and intelligent child, Harriet’s parents hoped that she would learn house chores to avoid the backbreaking work in the fields.

However, Harriet’s greatest desire was to work outdoors: her father had schooled her in the lore of the forests and rivers, the night stars and how to find herbs and berries for food and medicine. She was set to work watching muskrat traps. She hated to see the creatures caught, but she loved working the river. Working out of doors, she developed great physical strength and added to her knowledge of signs in nature. Her hope was that one day her skills would help her gain her freedom.

In 1844 Harriet married a free black, John Tubman. She loved him dearly, but couldn’t give up her lifelong dream of freedom for herself and her people. From early childhood she had heard of slave revolts and escapes through the routes that led North, called the “Underground Railroad.” After five years of marriage, Harriet decided to run away, but could not convince her husband to join her. Three of her brothers started out with her, but, fearful of capture, returned to their masters. Harriet continued alone.

On her path, Harriet met a slave named Jim, who told her of a white Quaker woman who could help her; this was her introduction to the “Underground Railroad.” Harriet led many hazardous journeys, returning to the South 19 times over 10 years to guide more than 300 slaves to freedom in the Northern states and Canada. She was sometimes forced to use stern measures with some who became fearful of continuing the journey, an action that could put the entire group of travelers at risk.

In 1857, she returned to the Maryland plantation where she was born and rescued her parents from slavery. She settled with them in a small home in Auburn, New York, and continued living there with her second husband after the death of her parents.

Harriet Tubman died in 1913, leaving behind a legacy of generosity, courage and vision. Her life was often in jeopardy, and the price for her capture increased throughout her lifetime, but she never quit working against slavery. She may have been born into slavery, but she died free.
DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

• Think about the letters and songs you listened to in the performance. Which was your favorite? Why?

• Have you every heard of Harriet Tubman? What did you already know about her? What did you learn that was new information?

• Discuss what it must have been like for the men, women and children who followed Harriet on the “Underground Railroad.” What were their goals? What were the consequences if they failed?

• Harriet Tubman never learned to read or write, but she had many skills that helped her succeed in her aims of gaining freedom for her people. List and discuss the talents that helped her succeed.

FRAMEWORK FOCUS—HISTORY/SOCIAL STUDIES:

“The Underground Railroad” was a secret network of land and sea routes over which blacks had to travel to reach the Northern States and Canada. There were hundreds of "stations" in towns and cities of the Confederate border states. Travelers would begin with the name of one person or place; after arriving at that place or contacting that person they would receive directions to the next "station." Slowly, step by painful step, they secretly traveled north. The Railroad included the East and Midwest, and was a major source of harassment to slave owners.

Using classroom, library or internet resources, research and discuss the routes of travel for the “Underground Railroad.” Plot the routes on a map, listing the dangers in each pathway. Were there towns and mountains to avoid? Rivers to cross? How many miles did the escaping slaves have to travel before they were safe?

Research and discuss how the travelers ate, slept and moved north in secret. Research the consequences for slaves who were captured and returned to their "owners."

ACTIVITIES TO ENHANCE THE EXPERIENCE:

★ Discuss how the presentation of Harriet Tubman’s life and adventures reflected the time and place in which she lived. Discuss or list the events, lyrics or melodies seemed to transport you to that time period.

♦ Divide the class into two groups, asking them to imagine what it would be like to consider following the "General" to freedom in the North. Ask one group to make a list of reasons to go, and the other a list of reasons to stay. Partner students from opposite groups and ask them to practice discussing their "points of view." Students can invent a relationship between their characters (mother and child, siblings, friends, etc.) and a compelling reason why they must leave (or stay) as soon as possible. (being sold to another plantation, being punished, etc.) Students should rehearse and present their discussion to the class. Students may alternate roles so they each experience both points of view. Discuss the "conversations" with the class.

♦ Ask students to pretend to be a newspaper reporter from Harriet Tubman’s time. They should make a list of questions to be used in interviewing her. They should be sure to include references to historical events (the Civil War, Harper’s Ferry, Fugitive Slave Law, Abolition) and people (John Brown, Frederick Douglass, William Seward.)

♦ Owners made it very difficult for slaves to escape, keeping them illiterate and unaware of the basic geography of the land around them. Some owners even tried to keep them from knowing which direction was north! However, slaves who yearned for freedom couldn’t be stopped; they found many ways to overcome these handicaps. Directions north were passed from plantation to plantation, often through songs ("Follow the Drinking Gourd," which refers to the Big Dipper, the constellation that many followed on their journey north) or specially designed quilts (which were actually maps.) Thinking about the need for secrecy and the consequences if they were caught, what other ways do you think the slaves may have passed information? Make a list of the real and presumed methods, and compare them to methods of secret communication used by other cultures.

SUGGESTED RESOURCES:


Songs included in the performance:

“The Battle Hymn of the Republic"

“Go Down Moses"

“Follow the Drinking Gourd"

“Oh Freedom"
AND THE MUSIC CENTER ANNOUNCE
PAUL MORSE PRODUCTIONS TO PERFORM ON ____________________

____________________ and The Music Center today announced the upcoming Paul Morse Productions 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 Letters to Harriet Tubman. 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.

Letters to Harriet Tubman, from Paul Morse Productions, uses songs and stories of the Civil war era to tell the adventures of the heroic woman who fought slavery through the "underground railroad." Harriet Tubman, born a slave, grew to become one of the foremost warriors in the battle against slavery, helping and guiding hundreds of slaves, including her own parents, travel north to freedom. In this two-character play, Harriet is joined by her guitar-playing neighbor, Jeffrey Taylor, Jr. The production examines the history of the main character and of the times, and is interspersed with lively period songs and African-American spirituals, including "Go Down, Moses," "Oh, Freedom" and "Battle Hymn of the Republic." A telling tale of the difference that can be made through the strength and courage of one individual, this performance inspires and encourages the audience to hope, dream and achieve.

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

LETTERS TO HARRIET TUBMAN

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