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

THE ART OF PUPPETS & MARIONETTES

The Nutcracker
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. It features puppeteers from Jim Gamble Puppet Productions, presenting a program called “The Nutcracker.” The program will be in two parts: the first part is a story based on Tchaikovsky's famous ballet using marionettes; the second part will show us many kinds of puppets and some special ways you may use them. Please welcome The Art of Puppets & Marionettes' performance of “The Nutcracker!”

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**
- 20' wide x 12' deep minimum
- Portable stages must be sturdy, level and securely lashed

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

**AUDIENCE SEATING**
- In *The Nutcracker*, the marionettes perform on the stage floor
- For areas with no elevated stage, all audience seating should be arranged for easy viewing

**LIGHTING**
- *The Nutcracker* works best when performed in darkness

**ARRIVAL**
- 45 minutes prior to the scheduled start time to prepare and set up

**PARKING**
- Two spaces, one 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

**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

**EQUIPMENT**
- One electrical outlet
THE ART OF PUPPETS & MARIONETTES—The Nutcracker

ART FORM: Theatre
STYLE: Contemporary
CULTURE: Russian / American

MEET THE ARTIST:
Jim Gamble, founding director of the Art of Puppets and Marionettes, was an internationally respected puppet designer and performer known for his appealing productions and beautifully crafted puppets. His dynamic company, founded in 1972 and composed of accomplished puppeteers and puppet makers, has an eclectic repertoire that includes “Peter and the Wolf,” “Carnival of the Animals,” “The Nutcracker,” and “Hansel and Gretel.” Each production features familiar classical music or an original score. Strongly committed to education, the company performs in hundreds of California schools annually and in theatres and festivals throughout the U.S., Europe, Asia, and the Middle East. In 2001, Jim Gamble was the only American to perform at the Obratsov Puppet Theatre in Moscow in celebration of 100 Years of Russian Puppetry. National appearances include the Children’s Theatre Series in Hawaii and the International Children’s Festival in San Diego. Among the company’s many awards are the Parents Choice and Golden Apple awards for their video series, and the President’s Award from the Puppeteers of America.

PREPARING FOR THE EXPERIENCE:
Peter Ilyich Tchaikovsky, the first Russian composer to gain international fame, was a master of orchestration with a superb talent for blending instrumental sounds and achieving rousing orchestral effects. Born in Votkinsk in May of 1840, Tchaikovsky began to compose at the age of 10. In 1866, he completed a four-year study of music under pianist and composer Anton Rubenstein at the St. Petersburg Conservatory. Shortly thereafter, this sensitive man who struggled with periods of depression began composing seriously and teaching at the Moscow Conservatory of Music. Though he was often described as a composer of melancholy music, he had a broad emotional and musical range which included the spirited “1812 Overture,” the lyrical symphonic poem “Romeo and Juliet,” powerful symphonies, and the lively ballet “Nutcracker Suite.”

Deeply influenced by the work of Mozart, a western European, and Mikhail Glinka, a Russian, Tchaikovsky’s work represents a blend of the spirits of these two very different composers. First among his fellow Russian composers to write music in the Western manner, Tchaikovsky remained fully Russian in his feelings, incorporating quotations from Russian folk melodies into his work. Assured of an income by a wealthy benefactor, he left the Moscow Conservatory in 1877 to concentrate on composing. Tchaikovsky traveled widely and took part in the opening of New York’s Carnegie Hall in 1891. He died of cholera in November, 1893 at the age of 53.

The term “marionette” came into usage during the Middle Ages when the Nativity Play was performed with string puppets. The name for the Virgin Mary, known as “little Mary,” evolved into “Mari-onette.” Unique because they portray characters from head to toe, marionettes move very freely, and are manipulated by a combination of strings, wires, or rods attached to hand-held controls above the puppets. They can fly or dance, literally fall apart and reassemble themselves, or magically transform from one being to another before the audience’s eyes. This freedom of movement also makes the marionette the most difficult kind of puppet to control.

ABOUT THE PERFORMANCE:
Tchaikovsky’s enchanting “Nutcracker Suite” provides the musical background for this puppet production of “The Nutcracker.” Based on the original story, Jim Gamble’s adaptation of the classic holiday ballet is a marionette presentation. As the performance unfolds, the Sugar Plum Fairy guides the audience through a fantasy puppet world where toy soldiers, Russian Cossack acrobats, Arabian dancers, Chinese dragons, and even a Christmas tree come to life. The traditional duel of the evil Rat King and the Nutcracker hero caps the performance and creates a sparkling finale. The 45-minute show also includes an informative short piece entitled “The Art of Puppetry” which showcases various types of puppets, how to make and operate them, and how to use them in the classroom.
DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

- What character or musical segment of “The Nutcracker” did you find most memorable? Why?
- Did the differences in the rhythms, melodies, or moods of the music affect the movement of the puppets? In what ways?
- Were there certain musical ‘themes’ that occurred more than once or were repeated throughout “The Nutcracker?”
- The puppets used in “The Nutcracker” are called marionettes. What are some of the unique characteristics of a marionette?

ACTIVITIES TO ENHANCE THE EXPERIENCE:

- Hold a storytelling hour with your class using some of their favorite folk tales or fairy tales. Ask students to select a character from one of the stories to make as a puppet. On a simple puppet stage or platform in the front of your class, have students use their puppets to pantomime the action of the story as you read along. Or have students take on the voices of the puppet characters and bring the story to life in a puppet play.
- Improvisation involves making up dialogue and action without a written script. It is a fun and interesting way to develop imaginative puppet scenarios. Have students choose a partner and give each duo a situation to improvise. As a guideline for structure, stress that each scene should have a beginning, middle and end. The characters and conflict should be introduced in the beginning, developed in the middle, and resolved at the end. After improvising, have students share their work with the class.
- “The Nutcracker” is a classic ballet that is a traditional part of many winter holiday celebrations. Ask students to describe any special foods, music, rituals, dance or traditions that might be a part of their family’s winter holiday celebrations. Traditions may include visits to relatives, vacation trips or other family events. Encourage students to share their traditions with the class.
- In 1866, Peter Ilyich Tchaikovsky began composing seriously. Listen again to “The Nutcracker Suite” and select two musical pieces to discuss. Can you identify the themes of each? What is the mood of each? What are some of the characteristics of each selection? Describe the characteristics or qualities of each. Do they illuminate their titles? Why or why not?

FRAMEWORK FOCUS—SCIENCE:

Marionettes have often been referred to as nothing more than ‘pendulums with limbs.’ Ideally, a marionette should do all the work while the puppeteer holds on and is aided by gravity and the pendulum effect. In the perfect marionette, the center of gravity of each piece of the puppet is calculated.

Tie a small object onto a piece of string. Hold the string in one hand and give the object a gentle push so it swings from side to side in an arced path, like a pendulum. Explore the concept of the pendulum and how it is aided by gravity. Construct a simple ‘jumping jack’, the simplest stringed marionette. Using cardboard and strong thread (or brads), draw a large body, then cut out the basic parts -- head, torso, legs and arms. Rotate the limbs to see what movement could take place when they are attached. The joints of the jumping jack work on overlapping circles pierced through the center of each, and then matched up. When you are satisfied with the movement potential, punch holes in the torso and each part where it will connect, then use thread or string to connect the pieces to the torso. Once you have completed the puppet, demonstrate the pendulum effect and consider the following question: How is this movement similar to the way a pendulum works?

SUGGESTED RESOURCES:


LEGEND

★ Artistic perception
● Creative expression
■ Historical & cultural context
◆ Aesthetic valuing
♦ Connections, Relations, Applications
AND THE MUSIC CENTER ANNOUNCE
THE ART OF PUPPETS & MARIONETTES TO PERFORM ON

and The Music Center today announced the upcoming Art of Puppets & Marionettes 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 The Art of Puppets & Marionettes. 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.

With three decades of performances credits, The Gamble Puppets annually perform for hundreds of audiences in the United States. International credits include tours in Japan, Korea, Singapore, France, Russia, Yugoslavia, Iran, Israel, Fiji, Micronesia, Siberia, Hong Kong, Bolivia and Croatia. Founder Jim Gamble was recognized as one of this country’s finest puppeteers. His award-winning company offers four productions. Each fosters entertainment-packed musical education, cultural enrichment and learning experiences in puppetry and literature.

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).

# # #

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

THE ART OF PUPPETS & MARIONETTES

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: