WE TELL STORIES

Feast from the East
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 entitled “Feast from the East” and features We Tell Stories. These actors are going to tell you folktales from China, Japan, and the Middle East. Folktales were originally told to teach lessons. So see if you can figure out the lessons these stories have to teach. Please welcome We Tell Stories!"

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

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

OUTDOOR PERFORMANCE
- The area must be shaded, sheltered from wind, and away from distractions

DRESSING AREA
One dressing room (not a restroom) near the stage

EQUIPMENT
- One microphone with stand for indoor performances.
- Three microphones for outdoor performances

AUDIENCE SEATING
- Need at least one aisle in the audience, for access to and from the stage.

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

PARKING
- Three spaces 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
WE TELL STORIES—Feast from the East

ART FORM: Storytelling/Theater
STYLE: Contemporary
CULTURE: Asian

MEET THE ARTIST:

We Tell Stories is a multi-ethnic storytelling troupe founded by Artistic Director Carl Weintraub. The company has a threefold purpose: to entertain and educate children through the literature, folklore, and mythology of all times and cultures; to expose them to the processes of language and acting as art forms; and to inspire them to plumb the depths and reach the heights of their own creativity. To this end, the group diligently seeks fresh material and performs it with an extemporaneous flavor, encouraging children to participate in their minds, from their seats and on the stage. In this way, the children see themselves as an integral part of the process, not only witnessing, but also experiencing the stories’ morals, the art, and the fun. An old trunk filled with props and costumes is the solitary set, and it is the group’s hope that the audiences go away saying to themselves, “I could do that!” And, perhaps they will!

ABOUT THE PERFORMANCE:

“A Feast from the East” is a delectable array of folktales originating from different parts of Asia including the Far East, Middle East and the Pacific Rim. “The Two Stonecutters” from Japan is a story about self-acceptance. A stonecutter who isn’t happy with her life wishes for more and more power until she finds that the most powerful thing she can be is herself. The Chinese story “How the Rabbit Got Long Ears” is similar to tales told in other cultures. A farmer uses glutinous (sticky) rice to trap an ornery rabbit. Farm hands and a special scarecrow are among the delightful characters in this tale. This feast of stories also includes “The White Elephant,” a story from India. This story features a character named Shankar, who finds the Elephant of Gods grazing in his garden, so he hitches a ride to the heavens and back. When his neighbors find out, and demand to also be taken, the result is a simple story with a great moral – featuring the importance of patience.

PREPARING FOR THE EXPERIENCE:

The purposes and values of storytelling are many.
• Telling a story is a gift - a shared experience that can bring people closer together.
• Storytelling introduces books and hopefully motivates the audience to read and explore literature.
• Storytelling can help teach language skills.
• Through storytelling, the audience can gain insight into motives and patterns of human behavior.
• Storytelling is a way to keep cultural heritage alive.
• Hearing stories gives the listeners practice in visualization, the basis of creative imagination.
• Storytelling brings dramatic joy to the teller and the listener alike.

Characteristics of a good story are:
• a single theme, clearly defined
• a well-developed plot
• style (vivid word pictures, pleasing sounds, rhythm)
• believable characterizations
• faithfulness to source material

A good story for telling is one that, like a good book, has something to say and says it in the best possible way. Stories help people understand events, people, and relationships through the problems, challenges, choices and actions of different characters. The different points of view of each character can be seen, and perhaps better understood. Stories give us a chance to discuss things in a way that focuses on the lives of the characters, rather than ourselves. A story can shorten an experience or expand it to help us see the many layers of each scenario. We more clearly see the relationship between ones actions and consequences.
DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

- What did you like about the show? What do you wish could have happened in the show?
- How are you similar or different from a character in the show?
- What character surprised you the most? Which one did you least understand?
- Discuss the moral, or lesson, to be learned from each story.
- Have you been in a similar situation with similar problems as the main character in one of the stories? What did you do to solve your problem? Knowing what you know now, what might you have done differently?
- What is the difference between a live show and a television show?
- In “Cutie Cockroach,” Cutie tries to change who she is to be accepted by another creature. Have you ever tried to change your appearance so that someone else might like you more? Share what happened.
- The “White Elephant” is set in India. Find India on a world map. Where is it in relation to North America?
- “How the Rabbit Got Long Ears” is a tale told from China. What other tales do you know from other cultures or countries with a rabbit as one of the main characters? Are the rabbits similar in character or different?

FRAMEWORK FOCUS—LANGUAGE ARTS:

Write a review about the show, critiquing the following:

Plot—What happened in the story? Identify the beginning, middle and end?

Character—Who were the characters? Describe each one.

Motive—What did the characters want? What did they have to do to get what they wanted?

Costumes/Props—What did the characters look like? What costumes did they wear? What objects would they use?

ACTIVITIES TO ENHANCE THE EXPERIENCE:

- Identify and discuss the tools that a good storyteller needs. (a good story to tell; clear use of language and a voice that engages the interest of the audience; hand gestures; facial expressions, etc.) Are these the same for actors portraying different characters in a play about the story? What tools might the actors need that are different? (posture and energy that conveys the character; actions such as walking and sitting, as well as posture and gestures that show the mood or feelings; etc.)
- By using their bodies, voices, faces, and imaginations, actors pretend to be someone else. Have you ever acted before, or pretended to be something or someone else (an elephant, a rabbit, a roach)? What did you do with your body or voice to create a character? Observe how We Tell Stories actors portray characters.
- Sometimes we will find traditional stories, such as “Cinderella” that are told in different cultures with variations. Go to the Music Center’s website (http://www.musiccenter.org/education/Teacher-Resources/Artsource-Curriculum/). Check under Dance and find the Anna Djanbazian unit that features The Persian Cinderella. There is a unit of study and a lesson to teach.
- In this performance by We Tell Stories, there were stories that were from a few different cultures. What things in the “White Elephant,” a tale from India, gave you clues about that culture? How about the story from China, “How the Rabbit Got Long Ears?” What clues did you see that helped you to know that it came from China?
- Select two stories that were performed. Challenge each other to identify things that were similar and things that were different about each one. Do a Venn diagram (two circles that are side by side with each circle partially overlapping. Write the things that were different, or unique to each story, in the open space of the two circles. Then write similarities in the overlapping space of the two circles. Discuss your choices.
- Discuss how a story written down is different from a play format that is written down. (A story is written like a book, but a play has the setting and characters described. The lines of each of the character are written in the form of a script. Often, a description of each scene is written in the script.)

SUGGESTED RESOURCES:


School Contact Name: _____________________________
Phone: ________________________________

_______________________ AND THE MUSIC CENTER ANNOUNCE
WE TELL STORIES TO PERFORM ON __________________________

_______________________ and The Music Center today announced the upcoming We Tell Stories 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 We Tell Stories. 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.

We Tell Stories is a masterful group of theatre artists, founded in 1981 by children’s theatre innovator Carl Weintraub. The group uses a unique blend of storytelling, audience participation and sometimes original music to bring folklore, literature and mythology from all cultures and times to life. An old trunk filled with homemade props and costumes serves as the vehicle through which sets and characters are created, with ordinary objects transforming to support extraordinary stories. Humor and fantasy enthrall as stories of honesty, friendship, self-esteem and more enlighten all audiences. The professional artists who make up the company of We Tell Stories handle audiences of all age ranges with ease, and consistently deliver first-rate, mad-cap performances with joy and enthusiasm. Whether the viewer is young or simply young at heart, We Tell Stories is sure to capture, entertain and educate.

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

WE TELL STORIES

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