

**The Music Center
Performing Artists
in Schools and
Neighborhoods**

**Exciting
Dance
Music
Theatre
Storytelling
Performances
Come To You**

WILL & COMPANY

A Christmas Carol

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 host 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, notify The 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.

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 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.

PRESS RELEASE AND POSTER

A template press release is included should you wish to publicize the event. If you wish to use it, simply copy the text into a word document and fill in the blanks with the appropriate information. A premade poster is also included to let your community know about the upcoming event.

CURRICULUM CONNECTION FOR CLASSROOM TEACHERS

These pre- and post-event classroom activities are designed to deepen the understanding and engagement 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.

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.

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.

Performance Introduction

"I would like to introduce today's performance which is presented by The Music Center of Los Angeles County. The name of this company of actors is Will and Company. They will be presenting scenes from Charles Dickens' classic novel, "A Christmas Carol." Please welcome Will and Company!"



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 10' deep minimum (some flexibility available)
 - Must be clean and lighted

SURFACE

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

DRESSING AREA

- One clean, secured dressing area will be needed

AUDIENCE PARTICIPATION

- This performance provides a unique opportunity for a few audience members to be performers in each show
- Please select 6 people to participate for each show (can be different participants for each show or the same participants for each show)
- Participants should report to the performance space 30 minutes prior to the performance. (If performance schedule is tight and includes multiple shows, all participants should arrive 30 prior to the first performance)

ARRIVAL

- 60 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 representative ready to welcome the performers and to stay and help as needed

START TIME

- Please prepare to start the program on time
- Audiences should be in the venue, seated and ready to begin at the listed times

WILL & COMPANY—A Christmas Carol

ART FORM: Theatre

STYLE: Classical

CULTURE: Western European

MEET THE ARTIST:

Will & Company is a multicultural theatre ensemble with a "Professional Designation in Arts Education" award from the Los Angeles County Department of Arts and Culture. This unique company performs exciting adaptations of some of the world's greatest classic literature. Under the artistic direction of Colin Cox, they present major scenes from plays, interspersed with narration and background information. Some plays performed by Will & Company include physical humor and dazzling swordplay. The troupe performs Shakespeare's "Romeo and Juliette," as well as adaptations of other great works, such as Homer's "The Odyssey," and Charles Dickens' novella, "A Christmas Carol." Will & Company has performed locally at The Geffen Playhouse, The Los Angeles Theatre Center, and El Capitan. They also tour nationally, presenting both classic works and original plays highlighting diversity. In 2005, Will & Company was nominated for a GLADD award for their production of "A Pebble in My Shoe."

ABOUT THE PERFORMANCE:

"A Christmas Carol," is a humorous and touching tale by one of England's most beloved authors, Charles Dickens. It is a non-denominational thematic exploration of poverty, family and giving. True to the Will & Company style, "A Christmas Carol" is highly interactive - students get the chance to act alongside a group of professional actors and contribute to a delightful rendition of the famous story.



PREPARING FOR THE EXPERIENCE:

About the Author: Victorian novelist Charles Dickens (1812-1870) is one of the most popular writers of all time, with credits including "Oliver Twist," "A Tale of Two Cities" and "Great Expectations." He became known for his rich characters and vivid prose. Dickens' mother forced him to work in a shoe-polish factory starting at age twelve, driving him to incorporate the woes of the working class into his writing. He also covered such diverse social topics as the economy, Victorian bureaucracy and rigid social stratification. He was known for his evocative descriptions of London.

About the Novella: Dickens wrote five Christmas novellas, of which "A Christmas Carol" (1843) is the first and most famous. This ghost story tackles the problems of poverty and social injustice. It was written as a potboiler (a book written for profit and lacks literary strength) in order to pay off his mounting debt. Despite this inauspicious genesis, the novella proved that not all potboilers lack artistic merit. "A Christmas Carol" not only provided Dickens with needed money, it quickly became one of the most iconic Christmas tales ever written. His story is also credited with reinvigorating Christmas traditions, at a time when they were in decline. The original printing included illustrations created by noted English caricaturist, John Leech, a man of sharp wit who was of like mind with Dickens when it came to social injustice and poverty.

Synopsis: The main character, Ebenezer Scrooge, is a mean and miserly man. He believes that Christmas is just an excuse for otherwise productive members of society to miss work and for the poor to expect handouts. He doesn't believe in the good cheer and charity that the season promotes. On Christmas Eve, Scrooge is working in his counting house with his clerk, Bob Cratchit. After visits from his cheerful nephew Fred (who is dismissed by Scrooge with the famous "Bah! Humbug!") and two solicitors seeking money for the poor (who are similarly rebuffed), Scrooge lets Cratchit go home to his poor family. That night, Scrooge is visited by the ghost of his former business associate, Jacob Marley -- a man who was as greedy and cold as Scrooge. Marley warns Scrooge that if he continues to live so selfishly, he will spend eternity wearing the chains that his greed has forged. Three ghosts visit Scrooge that night: the Ghost of Christmas Past, the Ghost of Christmas Present, and the Ghost of Christmas Yet to Come. In different ways, they show Scrooge the error in valuing money over people. Scrooge is frightened by the bleak picture of his life and promises to change his ways. He awakens, on Christmas morning, a changed man. He becomes jolly and charitable, and transforms into the man he promised the ghosts he would become. He carries the spirit of Christmas with him all year round.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

- If you were to retell the story of "A Christmas Carol" in two or three sentences, what would you say?
- Which characters did you identify with most? Why? Which characters did you identify with least? Why?
- Describe Scrooge when he was young. What occurred that hardened his spirit, turning him into a coldhearted miser?
- What things did you learn from this story?
- What are the characteristics of the holiday season that are portrayed in the story?
- Did Will & Company's performance stir your interest in the books of Charles Dickens? In what way?
- Have you ever heard, read, or seen a film, play or other presentation of "A Christmas Carol?" If so, how was this performance different?

FRAMEWORK FOCUS—LANGUAGE ARTS:

As a class, think about "A Christmas Carol" and follow these steps to dramatize a class version:

1. Outline and record the key scenes on the blackboard.
2. List the main characters and choose three words that describe their personalities or physical characteristics.
3. Discuss the setting of the story. How many different locales and time periods are depicted? Ask the class how these places and times are represented.
4. Refer to your plot outline; divide the scenes into three parts -- beginning, middle and end.
5. Cast the scenes. (By dividing the story into three parts, different students get a chance to portray the main characters.)
6. Perform the story, improvising the dialogue and action, or have different narrators tell the beginning, middle and end, while others act out or mime the parts.
7. After the performance, discuss the scenes, emphasizing positive things students did. During discussions, refer to character names instead of names of students who played the parts.

ACTIVITIES TO ENHANCE THE EXPERIENCE:

Cr Charles Dickens wrote "A Christmas Carol" as if it were a carol in prose." Christmas carols were often written to tell stories of the Christmas season. Take a favorite Christmas carol and use it as a musical structure to develop a new song to tell part of the Dickens' story. (i.e., "Good King Wenceslas.")

Cn Party games were very much a part of a traditional Victorian Christmas. Notice that there is no mention of the giving of gifts throughout A Christmas Carol. Instead, this was a holiday for gathering with friends and family over good food and good company. The Cratchits sit by the fire after their meal and sing songs or tell stories, while at Fred's house the revelers provide us with examples of the popularity of games such as "Blind Man's Bluff" and "Questions." Make a list of the special traditions (games, songs, foods, visits, etc.) your family and friends use to celebrate Christmas or other winter holidays.

Re This story concerns the reversal of fortune for a rich miser. It has a pattern similar to many popular stories: the poor and deserving people end up doing well, and the villainous miser ends up a changed man, or is ruined. How many other stories can you compare with this one? Consider another popular Christmas story, "How The Grinch Stole Christmas." Make a list of other stories whose lessons reflect ideas around too much, or too little wealth, greed or misplaced values.

Re How is listening to a story a valuable experience? How does it compare to reading it or watching a film or video of a book?

SUGGESTED RESOURCES:

Dickens, Charles. *The Annotated Christmas Carol* with notes by Michael Patrick Hearn. Norton, 2003.

Dickens, Charles and Brett Helquist. *A Christmas Carol*, an adaptation of Dicken's tale, Harper/Collins. 2009.

Victorian Web. <http://www.victorianweb.org/>.

California Arts Standards: Artistic Processes

Cr Creating

Pr Performing/Producing/Presenting

Re Responding

Cn Connecting

Learn more at:

<https://tinyurl.com/ArtsStandardsCA>

Contact Name: _____

Phone: _____

_____ **AND THE MUSIC CENTER ANNOUNCE**
WILL AND COMPANY TO PERFORM ON _____

_____ and The Music Center today announced the upcoming performance of Will and Company on campus. The performance is presented by The Music Center's education department, part of TMC Arts, which provides many offerings including live performances, classroom workshops, scholarship and training programs, online arts curriculum, on-campus events and professional development.

Will & Company's founder/director Colin Cox and a touring group of artists, much like the troupes who traversed the provinces in Shakespeare's day, make ageless classics more accessible to young audiences. Celebrate the timeless language and classic theatre of Shakespeare's work by selecting a tragedy or a comedy for students to enjoy. Each performance features narration of the story of the play, a presentation of several major scenes, and information about the history and background of the play. These dynamic performances are a great way to intrigue, entrance and educate students about the captivating work of William Shakespeare.

For more than 40 years, The Music Center Performing Artists in Schools and Neighborhoods have been the premier resource for high-quality educational performances, offering one of the most compelling and diverse artistic rosters. The Music Center's incredible artists bring the magic of live performance to audiences throughout Los Angeles County, with an emphasis on programs that are an excellent fit for educational and neighborhood settings. All Music Center Performing Artists in Schools and Neighborhoods performances include standards-based curriculum materials that feature background information on the artists and their performance, as well as related classroom activities with connections to multiple curricular disciplines. Schools can choose from more than 60 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

The Music Center convenes artists, communities and ideas with the goal of deepening the cultural lives of every resident in Los Angeles County. The \$70 million non-profit performing arts organization has two divisions: TMC Arts and TMC Ops. TMC Arts, The Music Center's programming engine, provides year-round programming inside The Music Center's four theatres, on Jerry Moss Plaza, outside at Grand Park—a 12-acre adjacent green space—in schools and other locations all over Los Angeles County and on a digital platform called The Music Center Offstage. TMC Arts presents world-class dance with Gloria Kaufman Presents Dance at The Music Center, free and low-cost public concerts and events, as well as live and digital K–12 arts education programs, workshops, performances, interactive experiences and special events. TMC Ops manages the theatres, the Plaza and Grand Park, which comprise \$2 billion in county assets, on behalf of the County of Los Angeles. The Music Center is also home to four renowned resident companies—Center Theatre Group, Los Angeles Master Chorus, LA Opera and LA Phil. For more information, visit musiccenter.org. Follow The Music Center on Facebook, Instagram and Twitter @MusicCenterLA.

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For more information, please contact The Music Center at 213-972-3332. 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.

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Exciting
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Music
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Come To You

WILL & COMPANY



DATE: _____

TIME: _____

LOCATION: _____



musiccenter.org/performingartists
@MusicCenterLA

THE
MUSIC
CENTER
A TMC Arts Program

ARTS INTEGRATION PARTNERSHIPS

Music Center teaching artists work in classrooms to empower student creativity and develop their artistic, work-force and life skills. The program deepens learning across the curriculum in collaboration with classroom teachers by combining dance, music, theatre, visual and media arts with content areas including English Language Arts, history, science and social emotional learning for students of all ages and abilities.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

The Music Center's professional development programs bring educators together to participate in an experiential and immersive approach to integrating dance, music, theatre, visual and media arts into their classrooms. The focus is on meeting educators where they are and building their capacity over time and in depth — both at school sites and at The Music Center. As but one example, each year The Music Center's Arts Integration Symposium engages participants in all grade levels, art forms and content areas.

DANCE LEARNING PROGRAMS

Glorya Kaufman Presents Dance at The Music Center offers Student Matinee performances during each season featuring world-class dance performances that celebrate the diversity of L.A. communities; invited rehearsals that provide young people with an inside look at the creative process of dance companies in residence; master classes focused on technique, choreography and dialogue with professional dancers; and creative residencies where local youth engage with visiting dance companies for multiple days, including the Ailey school residency program.

STUDENT FESTIVALS

The Very Special Arts Festival engages students of all abilities as artistic creators and contributors. At the Blue Ribbon Children's Festival, fifth graders across the county experience live performances and dance together as a community.

SPOTLIGHT YOUNG ARTISTS PROGRAM

A nationally acclaimed, free arts training and scholarship program that develops the creative capacity of high school performing artists in Southern California.

ARTS GROWN LA

A new platform for artistic expression already thriving in communities throughout Los Angeles County. From performances at parks, community centers, libraries, senior centers and civic events, to Hip Hop dance parties and youth lessons, Arts Grown L.A. collaborates with community partners and neighborhoods to uplift artists and creativity, complementing existing local programs.

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, Grand Park, Dance DTLA, L.A. County Holiday Celebration, Plaza Concerts, and Symphonian Campus Tours, among other activities

For all our offerings, please visit us at www.musiccenter.org