

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

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

DANCING STORYTELLERS

Indian Mythology and Me

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 Dancing Storytellers will perform a selection of delightful stories from East Indian mythology using dance rhythms, hand gestures and facial expressions. Presenting Indian Mythology and Me, please welcome, the Dancing Storytellers!"



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 20' deep minimum
- Portable stages must be sturdy, level and securely lashed

SURFACE

- A clean and safe freshly mopped (not waxed) floor for performing in bare feet
 - Irregularities covered with tape
 - Extraneous clutter removed

OUTDOOR PERFORMANCE

- Outdoor performance space acceptable only if lavalier microphones are provided.
- A splinter free wood surface preferred
 - No concrete or blacktop
 - Tile and carpet are acceptable

DRESSING AREA

- One private dressing area near the stage with access to an adult bathroom
 - Access to drinking water

EQUIPMENT

- An 1/8th" (headphone jack) or Bluetooth connection to sound system

AUDIENCE SEATING

- If there are no front stairs to the stage there should be a cleared passage from the audience to the side stage stairs (ideally on both sides) as the performers bring students onto the stage

ARRIVAL

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

PARKING

- Two spaces 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 with lighting and sound cues

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

DANCING STORYTELLERS—Indian Mythology and Me

ART FORM: Dance and Storytelling/Theater

STYLE: Contemporary

CULTURE: Indian

MEET THE ARTIST:

Dancing Storytellers performances offer contemporary interpretations of South Asian stories, dance and music. The collective includes Sheetal Gandhi, Shyamala Moorthy and Ulka Simone Mohanty—artists that inspire youth through artistic innovation, personal transformation and social change.

Sheetal Gandhi is a multi-talented artist: choreographer, singer, dancer, actor, and percussionist, formerly with Cirque du Soleil. Her solo and group choreography has toured to over 16 countries. Shyamala Moorthy has toured her dance and theater work internationally with TeAda Productions and the Post Natyam Collective. She also teaches yoga and dance and is a dance education curriculum writer and consultant. Ulka Simone Mohanty is an actor, dancer and choreographer who has performed internationally and has choreographed multiple shows for Disney's Animal Kingdom. She also voices the role of Dr. Kapur on the NBC Universal's kids' animation show Nina's World.

ABOUT THE PERFORMANCE:

Indian Mythology and Me offers innovative and contemporary interpretations of traditional texts that reinforce human compassion and celebrate our differences. The collective performs as a dynamic duet, artfully weaving foot rhythms, hand gestures and facial expressions into an interactive exploration of Indian mythology and its connections to our world today. Audience members are playfully integrated into the performance as each story emphasizes empathy and the power of expression in Indian dance forms. The stories include "Bheema Meets Hanuman" from the epic Mahabharata in which Hanuman teaches Bheema the folly of judging an individual based on their appearance; "The Mice That Set Elephants Free" from the Panchatantra Folktales tells the story of a small mouse who proves his worth to a doubting elephant; and "Durga and Mahishasura," a mythological story connected to the festival of Navaratri, in which the equality of genders is celebrated. These stories are expressed through theater and contemporary Indian dance movement based on the North and South Indian classical dances, Kathak and Bharatanatyam, as well as the Gujarati folk dance Garba Raas.

PREPARING FOR THE EXPERIENCE:

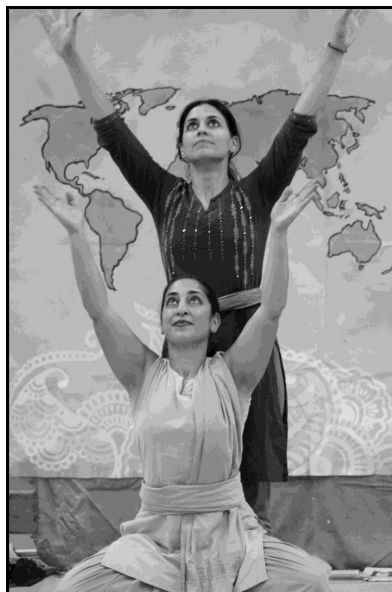
There are several forms of Indian Classical Dance and two of these forms are highlighted in this production: Bharata Natyam and Kathak. Both dance styles were traditionally solo dance forms performed by women, either within the temple precincts as a part of the daily ritual or in courts as entertainment for kings and courtiers.

The roots of the word Bharata in "Bharata Natyam" are bhavam, which means expression and ragam, meaning music, Thalam means rhythm and natyam means dance. The name "Kathak" is derived from the Sanskrit word katha meaning story, and katthaka in Sanskrit means "he who tells a story," or "to do with stories." Both dance forms have two main components: Nritya, or "pure dance" and Nritya, or "expressive dance." The coming together of both the technical aspects of dancing (nritya) and the expressive aspects of dancing (nritya) create Natya which is the full performance of dance, theater and music.

In most solo performances, "Bharata Natyam" and "Kathak" involve many split characters that are depicted by the dancer. The dancer will take on numerous characters by switching roles, creating a story-line that can be easily followed by the skill of one individual performer.

"Navratri" means nine nights, and is a festival that celebrates the Goddess Durga. It is associated with one of the stories that tell of Durga's victory after battling the evil demon king Mahishasura for nine days and nine nights. The festival is celebrated in India from late September through early October. Many Indian communities around the world, including Southern California, also celebrate it.

In the Indian state of Gujarat, the festival activities feature two folk dances, "Garba" and "Raas." The dance "Raas" (also called "Dandiya-Raas") imitates the fight between the goddess Durga and the demon Mahishasura, and uses dandiya sticks to represent the sword of Durga. "Garba Raas" is also performed at harvest celebrations, weddings, and dance competitions. Watch for the moment when the dancers in the show use the dandiya sticks in the battle.



DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

- If you could meet one of the characters from one of the three the stories, which character would you choose? Why? If you could ask them anything, what would it be? What do you think their answer might be?
- What were the external obstacles that the Mouse King was facing? What were the internal obstacles that the Mouse King was facing? Did he overcome those obstacles? How?
- The ability and power of the mouse king was underestimated by the elephant queen because of his small size, and Durga was underestimated by Mahishasura because she was a woman. Bheema thought the old monkey wasn't strong because he was old, the elephant queen thought the mouse king wasn't useful because he was small. Have you ever had to prove your worth despite what other people thought? Have you ever assumed something about someone only to discover that you were mistaken?
- How do you use gestures to communicate in your everyday life? Show examples like waving hello, pointing, etc.
- How many different emotions can you portray just in your face?

FRAMEWORK FOCUS—LANGUAGE ARTS:

Have students select a poem they know (or write their own) that has words and images and can be expressed through hand gestures. Then, have them create their own hand-gesture vocabulary to go with the poem. Each student will practice his/her dancing story and perform it for the class.

California Arts Standards: Artistic Processes

Cr	Creating
Pr	Performing/Producing/Presenting
Re	Responding
Cn	Connecting

Learn more at:

ACTIVITIES TO ENHANCE THE EXPERIENCE:

Cn Define "gesture" and then explore everyday hand gestures. Collect these gestures (such as the sign for "okay," or "thumbs up," or "stop," "come here," or "I don't know"). Compare these to the gestures you learned in the show. Discuss how the Indian dance mudras (gestures) could also have been created out of everyday gestures and then stylized for performance.

Pr Explore facial expressions. Put students in teams, and play a game like charades or Pictionary, but using only facial expressions. The class should make a list of all the emotions that they can convey through their face. Each emotion can be written on a different sheet of paper and all put in a box or bowl so students can draw one to show.

Re Most cultural stories were originally passed on through oral tradition. As they were told over and over, they were often changed and embellished. Although many of these stories are now written down, many variations still exist. Divide students into storytelling teams. Using books or the internet, have students research stories and then select one to learn and tell. There are many more animal stories like *The Mice That Set Elephants Free* in the *Panchatantra*, a collection of folktales from India, or students can research myths and legends from other cultures. Encourage students to think of the beginning, middle and end, as well as the key characters, main problem, resolution and sequence. They can use the "Four W's (When? Where? Who? Why?)."

Pr When you pair gesture to language, the memorization (of a poem, text or list) comes more easily. How can gesture be used as a tool to aid in the memorization of other subjects, such as history? Teachers can pick the subject of their choosing, and pull the most pertinent information that they want students to learn and remember. Then, as a class, create and decide upon a gestural language that "narrates" the event, problem, list or fact.

SUGGESTED RESOURCES:

Jagadiswarananda, Swami *Devi Mahatmyam, 700 Mantras on Sri Durga*. Sri Ramakristina Math, Mylapore, 1953.

Pai, Anant. *Tales of Durga*. Katha Amar Chitra, Bombay, 2008.

Chandrakant, Kamala. *Bheema and Hanuman*. Amar Chitra Katha, Bombay, 1980.

"The Little Mice and the Big Elephants Story." *Agra India – History, Architecture, Facts, Myths, Visit Timing & Entry Fee*, Cultural India, www.culturalindia.net/indian-folktales/panchatantra-tales/little-mice-big-elephants.html.

"Durga and Mahishasura." *The Birth of Garuda - Indian Mythology*, Apam Napat, www.apamnapat.com/articles/Devibhagavata030.html.

Contact Name: _____

Phone: _____

_____ AND THE MUSIC CENTER ANNOUNCE DANCING STOYTELLERS TO PERFORM ON _____

_____ and The Music Center today announced the upcoming performance of Dancing Storytellers. 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.

Indian Mythology and Me is a dynamic dance and theater performance created by the Dancing Storytellers. This group of artists create uplifting duets that artfully weave rhythm, song, gesture and facial expressions into an interactive exploration of Indian mythology and its connections to our world today. During this performance the artists interact directly with audience members, sometimes inviting them onto the stage where they are playfully integrated into the story. Audiences will be entertained and enlightened as they get to experience first-hand, the power of expression in Indian classical dances. Dancing Storytellers are Sheetal Gandhi, Ulka Mohanty and Shyamala Moorty.

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 Glorja 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 Chorale, 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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Neighborhoods

Exciting
Dance
Music
Theatre
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Performances
Come To You

DANCING STORYTELLERS



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, workforce 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