

**THE  
MUSIC  
CENTER  
ON  
TOUR**

A TMC Arts Program

**EXCITING  
DANCE  
MUSIC  
THEATRE  
STORYTELLING  
PERFORMANCES  
COME TO YOU**

# AMERICANA UNLIMITED

Beatrix Potter

# 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.

## **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 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.

## **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 below text into a word document and fill in the blanks with the appropriate information. A premade poster is also included to let your school community know about 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.

## PERFORMANCE INTRODUCTION



"I would like to introduce today's performance which is presented by The Music Center of Los Angeles County. Many of you have heard "The Tale of Peter Rabbit." Do you know who wrote it? Her name was Beatrix Potter. Today we are going to imagine that she is here with us right now. Later, you can even ask her questions. So, welcome an actor named Judith Helton who is playing that famous writer and painter, Miss Beatrix Potter.



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

- 12' wide x 8' deep minimum
- Portable stages must be sturdy, level and securely lashed with steps leading up to the stage

## SURFACE

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

## DRESSING AREA

- One private dressing area (not a bathroom) must be ready upon artist's arrival

## EQUIPMENT

- Have the following set up, cleared and ready before the artist arrives: one 6' wide table

## ARRIVAL

- Artist will arrive 1 hour before start time
- Artist will need to get into costume and set up the performance area

## PARKING

- One space near the venue for loading and unloading

## ASSISTANCE

- Please have a school representative ready to welcome the performers and to stay and help as needed; this representative should have access to any doors and lights and power in the performance area

## 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

## AMERICANA UNLIMITED—Beatrix Potter

**ART FORM:** Storytelling/Historical Character

**STYLE:** Contemporary

**CULTURE:** Western European

### MEET THE ARTIST:

Actress Judith Helton literally steps into the past when she goes to work. Since 1976, she has brought history to life with her intriguing portrayals of women of accomplishment and artistic talent. Her versatile repertoire of one-woman shows consists of three from American history - First Lady Abigail Adams, Gold Rush entertainer Lotta Crabtree, pioneer author Laura Ingalls Wilder - and England's author/illustrator, Beatrix Potter. Each portrayal is meticulously researched from an historical perspective. Ms. Helton's professional theatre credits include work in resident acting companies in Baltimore, Milwaukee, Houston and San Diego. Internationally she has performed at the Edinburgh, Scotland "World Theatre Festival," and in Dublin and Cork, Ireland. Ms. Helton's commitment to authenticity in her performances has led her to master such specialized skills as spinning, weaving, banjo playing and antique costume construction. She so truly 'becomes' the women she plays, that it is little wonder when leaving her home she is asked by neighbors, "Who are you today?"

### ABOUT THE PERFORMANCE:

Ms. Helton's portrayal of Beatrix Potter illuminates the life of the author/illustrator who gave us such beloved stories as "The Tale of Peter Rabbit" and those of some of his friends, Benjamin Bunny, Mrs. Tiggy Winkle, Jemima Puddle-Duck and Mr. Jeremy Fisher. Ms. Potter shares some biographical information and tells a selection of her stories. The audience also learns "the tales behind the tales"--the real animals, people and incidents which inspired the characters and plots. Ms. Helton's costume is a copy of Beatrix Potter's wedding garb, representing her as she looked on her wedding day in 1913 at age 47. That event marked both an end to Beatrix's life with her parents and her creative writing career. She embarked on a new life with her lawyer husband, Mr. William Heelis, devoting herself to him and their country property, "Hill Top Farm."

### PREPARING FOR THE EXPERIENCE:

The Tale of Peter Rabbit began as an illustrated letter to a little boy, Noel Moore. When Noel's mother, Annie, was twenty, she had been a governess to Beatrix Potter who was 17. Two years later, Annie married and moved away, but the two women kept in close touch. When five-year old Noel became ill, Beatrix Potter sent him a picture letter all about Peter Rabbit and his adventures in Mr. McGregor's garden. The character of Peter was based on Beatrix's pet rabbit, Peter Piper. The now famous letter was written on September 4, 1893. A few years after the Peter Rabbit letter had been sent to Noel, it occurred to Beatrix Potter that she might make a little book of the story. She wrote to ask if Noel had kept that letter, and, if so, could she borrow it? Noel had in fact kept the letter and was happy to lend it to her. Beatrix Potter rewrote the story in a stiff-covered exercise book and prepared 42 pen-and-ink drawings to illustrate it. It was called The Tale of Peter Rabbit and Mr. McGregor's Garden, by H.B. Potter. In addition to the black-and-white drawings there was a colored frontispiece, showing Peter in bed, and his mother, Mrs. Rabbit, giving him a cup of chamomile tea.



Canon Rawnsley, a friend of the family and a founding member of The National Trust, became interested in Beatrix Potter's idea to make a book out of this story letter. He offered to help her find a publisher and to submit the manuscript on her behalf. In 1900 the story was sent to at least six publishers, all of whom rejected it. The following year the undaunted Beatrix withdrew eleven pounds from her savings and published 250 copies herself. The little tale became immensely popular among her family and friends. When she submitted the tale to publishers Frederick Warne & Co., they accepted it and still publish her works today.

## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

- What kind of childhood did Beatrix Potter have?
- How did Beatrix Potter's life influence her art?
- If you look at the illustrations in her books, what do the clothing choices of the characters tell you about their personalities? Cite examples.
- What are your favorite Beatrix Potter stories? Why?
- Do you have a pet or favorite animal that you could use as a character around which to create a story? Try telling a story about this animal and then write it down.

## FRAMEWORK FOCUS—SCIENCE:

*Beatrix Potter* was dedicated to preserving animal habitats and the land's natural beauty. She willed her home and farm to a nature conservancy organization called the National Trust, in Briton. This is an organization concerned with the preservation of historic buildings and monuments and areas of the countryside of great beauty in England, Wales, and Northern Ireland. It was founded in 1895 and incorporated by act of parliament in 1907. Southern California is home to many different species of animals and plants. Brainstorm a list of all the animals, birds, fish, reptiles, flowers, trees that are found in this area. Are their habitats threatened? Are any on the list of endangered species? Discuss ways that your class can support environmental causes to save our parks, beaches and wilderness areas from overdevelopment and pollution. Contact the [Sierra Club](#), the [World Wildlife Fund](#), or the groups listed below for additional information.

[The Nature Conservancy](#) has acquired and preserved 92 million acres around the world. Their mission is to preserve plants, animals and natural communities by protecting the lands and waters they need to survive.

[Heal the Bay](#) is dedicated to cleaning up the waters and beaches of the Santa Monica Bay. Through their work, sewage dumping has decreased, drainage has been cleaned up, and endangered species have returned to our coastal waters.

### California Arts Standards: Artistic Processes

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

Learn more at:

<https://tinyurl.com/ArtsStandardsCA>

## ACTIVITIES TO ENHANCE THE EXPERIENCE:

**Pr** Look through magazines and select a plant or animal that appeals to you. Complete a detailed life-study drawing of a plant or animal. Beatrix Potter observed and drew her pets, farm animals, and various wildflowers and plants in country gardens. Ask students to pay particular attention to proportion and color so that they draw a realistic picture of their subject, rather than one that is impressionistic or stylized.

**Cn** The "Tale of Peter Rabbit" began as a 'picture letter.' Write an illustrated letter to someone, telling them about a family pet or favorite animal. Research Beatrix Potter's original letter to Noel Moore.

**Cr** Research an author of your choice and perform a two-minute characterization as your literary figure. Develop a costume, adding a wig, mustache, eyeglasses or jewelry to complete the portrait. Read brief excerpts of your character's published works as part of your presentation.

**Cr** Conceptualize an original story based on first-hand observation of an animal subject. Students should give human traits to their animal characters as *Beatrix Potter* did. Create characters with distinct personalities, noting their habits, friendships, joys, fears, secrets, etc.

**Re** Choose two or three *Beatrix Potter* tales and interpret how morals or lessons are taught by the stories. Describe how *Beatrix Potter's* animal characters relate truths which pertain to humankind.

**Pr** Divide the class into cooperative groups to dramatize a *Beatrix Potter* tale. Cast one student in each group as the narrator who will thread the story along, and set up the scenes to be acted out. Improvise dialogue and action. Select simple props or costume pieces to visually bring the stories to life.

## SUGGESTED RESOURCES:

Hobbs, Anne Stevenson and Beatrix Potter. *Beatrix Potter's Art: A Selection of Paintings and Drawings*. Frederick Warne & Co. Ltd., 1990.

Lane, Margaret. *The Tale of Beatrix Potter*. Frederick Warne & Co. Ltd., 2011.

*Tales of Beatrix Potter*, told by Nadia, Blackstone Audio-books, 2007.

"Judith Helton." The Music Center, The Music Center, [www.musiccenter.org/education/Teacher-Resources/Artsource-Curriculum/Available-ArtSource-Units/Judith-Helton/](http://www.musiccenter.org/education/Teacher-Resources/Artsource-Curriculum/Available-ArtSource-Units/Judith-Helton/).

School Contact Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

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## \_\_\_\_\_ AND THE MUSIC CENTER ANNOUNCE AMERICANA UNLIMITED TO PERFORM ON \_\_\_\_\_

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\_\_\_\_\_ and The Music Center today announced the upcoming performance of Americana Unlimited on campus. As part of the school's continuing efforts to supplement its curriculum and its students' educational experience through a live performance, the school will host a special presentation from The Music Center on Tour roster. 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.

Actress Judith Helton literally steps into the past when she goes to work. Since 1976, she has brought history to life with her intriguing portrayals of women of accomplishment and artistic talent. Her versatile repertoire of one-woman shows consists of three from American history -- First Lady Abigail Adams, Gold Rush entertainer Lotta Crabtree, pioneer author Laura Ingalls Wilder -- and England's author/illustrator, Beatrix Potter. Each portrayal is meticulously researched from an historical perspective. Ms. Helton's professional theatre credits include work in resident acting companies in Baltimore, Milwaukee, Houston and San Diego. Internationally she has performed at the Edinburgh, Scotland "World Theatre Festival," and in Dublin and Cork, Ireland. Ms. Helton's commitment to authenticity in her performances has led her to master such specialized skills as spinning, weaving, banjo playing and antique costume construction.

The Music Center on Tour is a program of TMC Arts, The Music Center's programming engine, which provides relevant, engaging arts experiences that deepen the cultural lives of all in Los Angeles County. For more than 40 years, The Music Center on Tour has 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 settings. All Music Center on Tour 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 75 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 non-profit performing arts organization has two divisions: The Music Center Arts (TMC Arts) and The Music Center Operations (TMC Ops). TMC Arts, The Music Center's programming engine, provides year-round programming inside The Music Center's four theatres, on The Music Center Plaza, outside at Grand Park—a 12-acre adjacent green space—and in schools and other locations all over Los Angeles County. TMC Arts presents world-class dance with *Glorya Kaufman Presents Dance at The Music Center*, free and low-cost public concerts and events, as well as K–12 arts education programs. TMC Ops manages the theatres, the plaza and Grand Park 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](http://musiccenter.org). Follow The Music Center on Facebook, Instagram and Twitter @MusicCenterLA.

# # #

*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.*



# THE MUSIC CENTER ON TOUR

A TMC Arts Program

EXCITING  
DANCE  
MUSIC  
THEATRE  
STORYTELLING  
PERFORMANCES  
COME TO YOU

THE MUSIC CENTER PRESENTS

# AMERICANA UNLIMITED



DATE: \_\_\_\_\_

TIME: \_\_\_\_\_

SCHOOL: \_\_\_\_\_



[musiccenter.org/ontour](http://musiccenter.org/ontour)

THE  
MUSIC  
CENTER



# OTHER EDUCATION PROGRAMS



## ARTS INTEGRATION PARTNERSHIPS

The Music Center's teaching artists work in the classroom to empower student creativity and develop their artistic, workforce and life skills. Arts Integration Partnerships deepen learning across the curriculum in collaboration with classroom teachers by combining dance, music, theatre and visual 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 and visual 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 Summer Arts Studio for Educators engages participants in all grade levels, art forms and content areas.

## STUDENT MATINEE PERFORMANCES

Each year, *Glorya Kaufman Presents Dance at The Music Center* offers free student matinee dance performances where young people experience world-class dance performances that celebrate the diversity of L.A. communities. 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 from across L.A. County experience a live professional performance at a world-class performing arts center, then gather together to perform a short-choreographed piece inspired by the production, dancing together as a community.

## VERY SPECIAL ARTS FESTIVAL

The Very Special Arts Festival is an annual admission-free event engaging students of all abilities as artistic creators and contributors. The festival features student and professional performances on a large stage, visual and performing arts workshops, and a student art exhibit created around a central theme.

## SPOTLIGHT

*Spotlight* is a free education and scholarship program open to Southern California teens, offering arts training, experience/workforce development skills and awards more than \$100,000 in scholarships annually.

## 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, and Symphonian Campus Tours, among other activities

For all our offerings, please visit us at [www.musiccenter.org](http://www.musiccenter.org)

