

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

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

**DAVID PRATHER**  
Star-Spangled Poetry

# 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. This performance is titled "Star-Spangled Poetry," and it features actor and author David Prather. Mr. Prather will perform great American poems that reflect the ideals of our nation - liberty and equality for all. Please welcome David Prather!"



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

- 10' wide x 10' deep minimum
- Portable stages must be sturdy and securely lashed, with steps leading up to the stage

## SURFACE

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

## OUTDOOR PERFORMANCES

- Shaded
- Protected from wind, traffic and playground noise
  - Good acoustics
- Sound system with one microphone stand is required

## EQUIPMENT

- One microphone with a stand
  - Sound system
- One 4-6 foot table

## ARRIVAL

- Artist will arrive thirty minutes prior to the scheduled start time to prepare and set up

## PARKING

- One space near 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

## DAVID PRATHER — Star Spangled Poetry

**ART FORM:** Theatre/Storytelling

**STYLE:** Contemporary

**CULTURE:** North American

### MEET THE ARTIST:

David Prather, a charismatic actor and author, has earned a Princeton education, as well as receiving training at the American Conservatory Theatre in San Francisco, California. Combining all that he learned, he has utilized his experience and knowledge to create original works for young audiences. Whether performing his school assembly programs in multi purpose rooms, or sharing the stage with Julie Andrews at Walt Disney Concert Hall, Mr. Prather uses improvisatory humor and wit to engage and entertain his audience. As "Cap'n Dave," he delighted thousands over many years as the host of "Summer Sounds" at the Hollywood Bowl. He has performed with the Pacific and San Francisco Symphonies, as well as at the Getty Center, the Skirball Cultural Center and other arts institutions. At The Music Center, he has performed Shakespeare at the Mark Taper and hosted concerts with the Los Angeles Philharmonic.

### ABOUT THE PERFORMANCE:

David Prather's "Star-Spangled Poetry" is a theatrical interpretation of the idea and ideals of America as expressed by our nation's greatest poets. Starting with Francis Scott Key's stirring "Star-Spangled Banner" and the War of 1812, the show sets iconic poems in their historical context and then renders them dramatically. Against the backdrop of a torn American flag, Mr. Prather becomes Key, witnessing the British bombardment of Fort McHenry while composing his immortal lines. But, he also portrays Ferdinand Durang, a famed actor of the day, singing our anthem atop a tavern chair. In another scene, Mr. Prather costumes himself as Lady Liberty before mounting a pedestal to deliver the famous lines of Emma Lazarus' sonnet: "...give me your tired, your poor, your huddled masses yearning to breathe free." The Declaration of Independence's promise of "life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness" is explored through the works of great poets from Walt Whitman to Allen Ginsberg. Through the works of our nation's poets we experience the evolution of the principle that "all Men are created equal." With irony, humor and passion, artists across two centuries have defined and defended the democratic promise of the American dream.



### PREPARING FOR THE EXPERIENCE:

"The New Colossus," a poem by Emma Lazarus, is carved on the pedestal of the Statue of Liberty, an icon of American culture. The statue, whose original name was "Liberty Enlightening the World", was meant to celebrate the centennial of that auspicious date, July 4th, 1776 when America declared its independence from England. Accordingly, in her right hand Lady Liberty holds a torch; in her left hand rests a tablet, upon which is inscribed a date in Roman numerals: July IV MDCCLXXVI. Through her poem, Lazarus would come to redefine the meaning of the giant figure in New York harbor as a "mother of exiles." Sadly, she would not live to see its completion. Yet her immortal words gave expression to the reality of the millions of "huddled masses yearning to breathe free" who poured through America's "golden door" in the late 19th and early 20th centuries.

Another amateur poet, Francis Scott Key, captured the essence of the other enduring symbol of our nation, "the star-spangled banner" - our flag. Despite the widely-believed story of Betsy Ross sewing the first flag at the request of George Washington, the flag as we know it today did not come into being until after America had declared its independence. In fact, in the early stages of the Revolutionary War the most common flag flown in the colonies consisted of thirteen red and white stripes with the British Union in the upper right-hand box (canton). It was not until 1777 that the Continental Congress, in the midst of war, passed a flag resolution stating:

*"Resolved, That the flag of the thirteen United States be thirteen stripes alternate red and white; that the union be thirteen stars, white in a blue field, representing a new Constellation."*

There is no historical record why stars were chosen, or even what congress meant by the phrase "a new constellation." It is clear that the number 'thirteen' signified the original colonies. However, by 1794 the newly independent United States had grown with the addition of Vermont and Kentucky, and a new flag resolution increased the number of stars, as well as stripes, to fifteen. This flag, which flew over Fort McHenry during the War of 1812, and which inspired Francis Scott Key's national anthem, was already outdated at the time. In 1818, a Flag Act resolved the problem of a growing nation by stipulating that while the stripes would revert to the original thirteen in number, an additional star would be added to the *canton* for each new state as it was admitted to the union. And thus was born the "star-spangled banner that yet waves o'er the "land of the free, and the home of the brave."

## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

- Why do we sing the *"The Star-Spangled Banner"* before baseball games and other sporting events like the Super Bowl? Is this appropriate? Give reasons to support your opinion.
- In his poem, *"I Hear America Singing,"* Walt Whitman enumerates the "varied carols" he heard in the 19th Century. What are some of the contemporary "carols" (modified from choral singing) heard in America today?
- What does the Declaration of Independence's promise of *"the pursuit of happiness"* mean to you?
- What does it mean to be patriotic? What is the definition of "patriotic?" (expressing devotion to, and showing vigorous support of one's country) How do the various poets in the show demonstrate their patriotism?
- How have the poets in this show helped to expand the notion that *"all Men are created equal?"*

## FRAMEWORK FOCUS—LANGUAGE ARTS:

Poets reflect their historic era, as well as their individual artistic temperament, in both the form and content of their work. Francis Scott Key expressed his revolutionary sentiments in a traditional metric *scheme* (a systematic plan). Emma Lazarus appealed to America's radical promise within the formal corset of a sonnet. Walt Whitman, a true renegade in his personal life as well as his poetry, uprooted traditional notions of form by using free verse to express his vision of America.

Ask students to render the rhyming and metric verses of the *"Star-Spangled Banner"* or *"The New Colossus"* in free verse. This can be an individual or collaborative assignment; different clusters of students might tackle one of the four stanzas of the national anthem. Modern language can be employed to clarify meaning, e.g., *"In the dawn's early light . . ."* might become *"Tell me what you see as the sun rises..."* or *"From her beacon hand glows world-wide welcome"* something like *"The torch she holds shines its light on all."* Have students read their "translations" aloud, and discuss the merits of the new against the original.

### 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:

**Re** Have students select a patriotic song, or poem, and research the era in which it was written. Discuss how the work reflects the author's feelings about that historic moment. Read the poem aloud reflecting the author's sentiment.

**Re** Have students listen to patriotic music from different wars: a Sousa march or the Confederate ballad *"When Johnny Comes Marching Home"*; George M. Cohan's WWI hawkish, *"Over There"*; Irving Berlin's WWII hymn *"God Bless America"*; Jimi Hendrix' incendiary guitar version of *"Star-Spangled Banner"* at Woodstock.

**Cn** Our national anthem states: *"Then conquer we must, when our cause it is just; and this be our motto: in God is our trust."* Discuss this in terms of American foreign policy as it relates to current international conflicts. You can adapt this concept for younger grades.

**Cr** Have students research their own genealogy to share with the class or a partner. Create improvisations of immigrants arriving in America, or scenes of immigrants passing the Statue of Liberty as *"The New Colossus"* is recited.

**Cr** Francis Scott Key borrowed the tune for the *"Star-Spangled Banner,"* as did Woody Guthrie for *"This Land is Your Land."* Today, we call this practice "sampling": ask students to adapt the lines/lyrics from one of the poems in the show to a familiar song.

## SUGGESTED RESOURCES:

Sedeen, Margaret. *Star-Spangled Banner: Our Nation and its Flag*. National Geographic, 2001.

Tabori, Lena and Fried, Natasha editors. *The Little Big Book of America*. Welcome Books, 2002.

Clack, George. "Writers on America." International Information Programs, U.S. Department of State, [usa.usembassy.de/etexts/writers/homepage.htm](https://www.usembassy.de/etexts/writers/homepage.htm).

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

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

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**\_\_\_\_\_ AND THE MUSIC CENTER ANNOUNCE**  
**DAVID PRATHER TO PERFORM ON \_\_\_\_\_**

\_\_\_\_\_ and The Music Center today announced the upcoming performance of David Prather. 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.

Dubbed the "Maker of Merry" by the L.A. Times, actor David Prather has shared his lively blend of improvisation, verbal wit and physical comedy with audiences from schools to concert halls across California. Whether appearing with Julie Andrews at Disney Hall as host of the L.A. Phil's Holiday Sing Along, or engaging an assembly of rapt students in a multi-purpose room, Prather makes it his mission to entertain and enlighten. He has delighted audiences at the Hollywood Bowl (where he appeared for ten seasons as 'Cap'n Dave' of Summer Sounds) and in family programs at the Getty, Skirball, and Autry Museums. Mr. Prather is a graduate of Princeton University and the American Conservatory Theatre.

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](http://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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## DAVID PRATHER



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

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

**LOCATION:** \_\_\_\_\_



[musiccenter.org/performingartists](https://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](http://www.musiccenter.org)