

**THE
MUSIC
CENTER
ON
TOUR**

A TMC Arts Program

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

AMERICANA UNLIMITED

Laura Ingalls Wilder

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. This performance features actress Judith Helton's portrayal of Laura Ingalls Wilder. If you've ever read "Little House on the Prairie" or any of the Little House books by Laura Ingalls Wilder, then you've shared in the adventures of Laura's pioneer childhood. Imagine being in a log cabin surrounded by wolves or riding in a covered wagon. Today you will meet an actress named Judith Helton playing the famous author who actually lived these experiences.

Please welcome author Laura Ingalls Wilder!"



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—Laura Ingalls Wilder

ART FORM: Storytelling/Historical Character

STYLE: Contemporary

CULTURE: North American

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:

Miss Wilder wrote, "I wanted children now and in the future to understand more about the beginnings of things -- what it was that made America... I understood that my own life represented a period of American history. I had seen the whole frontier: the woods, the Indian country, the frontier towns, homesteaders and farmers... I realized that I had seen and lived it all." Fortunately, Laura Ingalls Wilder preserved her stories for all time in the "Little House" series of books. Judith Helton brings this famous author to life by portraying Laura, telling stories of her pioneer girlhood on the prairie. Tales are told of covered wagons, sod houses, homesteading, blizzards, wild animals and plagues of grasshoppers. Through all adversity, the courage, laughter, strong family ties and love endure. Photographs and maps help you visualize the real people and places the stories are based on. After the performance students can ask questions and learn little known facts about Laura's 90 years of life.



PREPARING FOR THE EXPERIENCE:

Thousands upon thousands of emigrant wagons traveled through the great central prairies and plains before pioneers thought of actually settling there. The vast region, stretching from the Missouri River to the Rockies and from the Canadian border to the Texas Panhandle, abounded in reasons for pressing on. It was treeless, matted with dense sod in its eastern reaches, arid farther west, and everywhere possessed of a climate that ran to brutal extremes of hot and cold. Summer droughts, when the thermometer rose well above 100 degrees and hovered there for weeks on end, could char a pioneer's corn crop as effectively as a blowtorch. In winter, when temperatures sometimes plunged to 40 degrees below zero, horrendous snowstorms struck so suddenly that a man might lose his way between his house and barn and freeze to death.

After the Civil War, Abraham Lincoln signed the Homestead Act of 1862 into law. It stated that citizens "who had never borne arms against the U.S. government" could file a claim for 160 acres of surveyed government land. During the next five years they must "improve" the claim by building a structure and cultivating the land. At the end of that time the land was theirs, free and clear, for a small fee of less than \$15. The Ingalls' obtained their farm in Dakota Territory (now South Dakota) in this way, as discussed in Laura's books, "thus fulfilling Pa Ingalls' dream." In the late 1870s, after the choicest lands had been filled, settlers spread out into the surrounding prairie. In the absence of wood and

stone, the only building material for a house was sod that was stripped from the soil. The only fuel was the dried manure of buffalo or cows. Droughts and grasshopper plagues brought havoc to crops. Finally, settlers moved westward into the semi-arid uplands of Colorado, Wyoming and the Dakotas.

These pioneers would not merely survive; they would convert the bleak expanse into some of the most productive farmland the world has ever known. As one young Nebraska settler wrote to his mother back East: "Ma, you can see as far as you please here and almost every foot in sight can be plowed." In only two decades, more new U.S. terrain was brought under cultivation than in the previous two and a half centuries.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

- Have you read any of the Laura Ingalls Wilder books? Have you seen any of the TV series, "Little House on the Prairie?" If so, what stands out for you?
- Think about the stories you heard in the performance. Which one was your favorite? Why?
- Have you ever visited any of the states where the Ingalls family lived? (Wisconsin, Kansas, Minnesota, South Dakota, Missouri). Find those states on a map. How do they differ from California?
- What kinds of houses did people live in on the American prairie in the 1870s and 1880s? Find pictures of sod houses, dug-outs and log cabins. How were they constructed? (See Little House on the Prairie by Laura Ingalls Wilder)
- What kind of hardships did pioneers face on the frontier? How did people survive the harsh winters? What happened if they ran out of firewood? (See Little House in the Big Woods and The Long Winter by Laura Ingalls Wilder)

FRAMEWORK FOCUS—SOCIAL SCIENCE:

Nothing affected the outcome of the pioneers' journey more directly than the wagons that had to carry them across thousands of miles of wilderness. A wagon had to be light enough not to place undue strain on the oxen that pulled it, yet strong enough not to break down under loads of as much as 2,500 pounds.

Find diagrams of a "prairie schooner" showing its various parts: the wagon bed, the undercarriage and the cover. Have students imagine they are pioneers going on a wagon train journey. Have them make lists of the various types of provisions they would need on the trip: bedding and tent supplies; cooking utensils; medicine and notions; weaponry; tools; food; clothing; luxuries.

Tell students they are allowed to take only two things of their own, such as a toy, doll, book or a musical instrument. What would they select? Why? Have them note their preparation lists in a diary and write entries as Laura Ingalls Wilder did from points along the trails.

Special Note: Selections from the Little House books are presented by arrangement with the copyright owner, The Little House Heritage Trust.

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 Discuss the "five W's" used in the performance (who, what, where, when and why). For each featured story about the Ingalls family, make a list identifying the central characters, the location, the time frame, and the main idea or plot.

Cr Develop frontier characters and role-play situations that may have been typical of their lives.

Suggestions for characters: blacksmith, pioneer mother, sheriff, railroad worker, rancher

Suggestions for settings: on the wagon train, in town, around the campfire, at the schoolhouse, at a fort, in the dug-out

Suggestions for situations: packing to leave home and bidding good-bye to neighbors and friends; keeping watch on the wagon train at night; hunting for food and water along the journey; a day of rest or festivities at a fort or town on the way; braving a winter storm; building a sod house; digging a well

Cn Research and cook an authentic frontier recipe such as "Johnny Cake." Preparing meals was very hard work. Describe how pioneer housewives had to obtain ingredients such as cornmeal (stoneground) or buttermilk (churned). Where and how did they get sweeteners like maple syrup and honey?

Cn Discuss the impact that the Laura Ingalls Wilder stories had on you and try to empathize with the characters. Compare and contrast the kind of hardships that the Ingalls family endured with the challenges you face today in your own life. How did you respond to the simplicity of their possessions and their forms of entertainment?

Cn When the day's journey on the wagon train was over, the campfire was the gathering place for weary travelers. Here they relaxed, swapped stories, sang songs and dreamed of the new lives they would find. Hold a classroom "campfire." Ask students to sit together in a circle as they share a piece of family history and interrelate; a favorite song they can sing or play on the guitar or harmonica, a fable or story with a lesson, a joke or funny memory or some sage advice.

SUGGESTED RESOURCES:

Anderson, William. *Laura Ingalls Wilder: A Biography (Little House)*. Harper Collins, 2000.

Anderson, William. *Pioneer Girl: The Story of Laura Ingalls Wilder*. Harper Collins, 2000.

Walker, Barbara M. *The Little House Cookbook: Frontier Foods from Laura Ingalls Wilder's Classic Stories*. Harper Collins, 1989.

School Contact Name: _____

Phone: _____

_____ AND THE MUSIC CENTER ANNOUNCE AMERICANA UNLIMITED TO PERFORM ON _____

_____ 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. 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.

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

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

