

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

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

PAUL MORSE PRODUCTIONS

Letters to Harriet Tubman

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

After the performance, you'll receive an invoice via email. 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. Imagine that you have traveled back in time to the year 1902. Pretend that you have made a journey from California all the way to the little town of Auburn in upstate New York. You are now sitting in front of the house of Harriet Tubman, a woman who endured many hardships in her mission to set her people free from slavery. Please welcome the Paul Morse Production of Letters to Harriet Tubman!”



Feel free to encourage the adult members of your audience to share the experience on social media!

Tag us on X, Instagram, Facebook, and TikTok at @MusicCenterLA and we might repost your photos!

SPACE

- 15' wide x 15' deep minimum
- Portable stages must be sturdy, level and securely lashed

SURFACE

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

OUTDOOR PERFORMANCE

If the performance must be held outdoors, the following conditions must be met:

- Performance space must be covered so that the artists are shaded and protected from wind and excess traffic or playground noise
 - Cannot perform on wet grass
- Audience cannot exceed 300 people

DRESSING AREA

- One private dressing room will be needed.

EQUIPMENT

- Sound system with microphone input. If two lavaliers are available, please let the artists know when they arrive.

ARRIVAL

- 15-30 minutes prior to the scheduled start time to prepare and set up

PARKING

- One space 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
- Students should be in the venue, seated and ready to begin at the listed times

PAUL MORSE PRODUCTIONS: Letters to Harriet Tubman

ART FORM: Storytelling/Historical Character

STYLE: Traditional

CULTURE: North American

MEET THE ARTIST:

Paul Morse was a composer, lyric writer and author of musical theatre who won numerous awards for his work. During the 1980s he worked extensively in Los Angeles and created many works for young audiences. Letters to Harriet Tubman, his most popular work, was performed in Washington DC with Paul playing the part of Jeffrey. In later years, it was adapted for school performances by Carl Weintraub. Carl is a PASA and Bravo award-winning stage, screen and TV actor, storyteller, educator, and founder/artistic director of We Tell Stories, who now plays the role of Jeffery. Patti Henley, who portrays Harriet Tubman, was deeply involved in the Civil Rights Movement in Chicago in the 1960s and 70s. A veteran vocalist, songwriter, playwright, and actress, she has sung with such artists as Michael Bolton, Jerry Butler, Diana Ross, Tower of Power, Marvin Gaye, Michael Jackson, and spent 30 years on the road with Smokey Robinson.

ABOUT THE PERFORMANCE:

Letters to Harriet Tubman is a series of vignettes highlighting the contributions of "the General"- the nickname fondly bestowed on Miss Harriet Tubman by her close friend, the famous abolitionist John Brown. Based on historical incidents and written with meticulous attention to authenticity, the performance casts the audience as participants: they play "visitors." The time is 1902; the location is Auburn, New York, and the audience is sitting on the front porch of Harriet Tubman. Ms. Tubman, now 80 years old, is entertaining a group of visitors as she reminisces about the heroic adventures of her life. Students learn about the events and politics of the era as Ms. Tubman, helped by her neighbor, Jeffrey Taylor, sing songs and recount stories of slavery, civil war and the struggle for freedom.



PREPARING FOR THE EXPERIENCE:

Harriet Ross Tubman was born into slavery in 1821. Her parents, Benjamin Ross and Harriet Green, named her Araminta, but she later changed her name to Harriet. She was one of ten children, several of whom were taken away in chains and sold to other plantation masters. A quiet and intelligent child, Harriet's parents hoped that she would learn house chores to avoid the backbreaking work in the fields.

However, Harriet's greatest desire was to work outdoors: her father had schooled her in the lore of the forests and rivers, the night stars and how to find herbs and berries for food and medicine. She was set to work watching muskrat traps. She hated to see the creatures caught, but she loved working the river. Working out of doors, she developed great physical strength and added to her knowledge of signs in nature. Her hope was that one day her skills would help her gain her freedom.

In 1844 Harriet married a free black, John Tubman. She loved him dearly, but couldn't give up her lifelong dream of freedom for herself and her people. From early childhood she had heard of slave revolts and escapes through the routes that led North, called the "Underground Railroad." After five years of marriage, Harriet decided to run away, but could not convince her husband to join her. Three of her brothers started out with her, but, fearful of capture, returned to their masters. Harriet continued alone.

On her path, Harriet met an enslaved man named Jim, who told her of a white Quaker woman who could help her; this was her introduction to the "Underground Railroad." Harriet led many hazardous journeys, returning to the South 19 times over 10 years to guide more than 300 slaves to freedom in the Northern states and Canada. She was sometimes forced to use stern measures with some who became fearful of continuing the journey, an action that could put the entire group of travelers at risk.

In 1857, she returned to the Maryland plantation where she was born and rescued her parents from slavery. She settled with them in a small home in Auburn, New York, and continued living there with her second husband after the death of her parents.

Harriet Tubman died in 1913, leaving behind a legacy of generosity, courage and vision. Her life was often in jeopardy, and the price for her capture increased throughout her lifetime, but she never quit working against slavery. She may have been born into slavery, but she died free.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

- Think about the letters and songs you listened to in the performance. Which was your favorite? Why?
- Have you every heard of *Harriet Tubman*? What did you already know about her? What did you learn that was new information?
- Discuss what it must have been like for the men, women and children who followed Harriet on the “Underground Railroad.” What were their goals? What were the consequences if they failed?
- *Harriet Tubman* never learned to read or write, but she had many skills that helped her succeed in her aims of gaining freedom for her people. List and discuss the talents that helped her succeed.

FRAMEWORK FOCUS—HISTORY/SOCIAL STUDIES:

“The Underground Railroad” was a secret network of land and sea routes over which blacks had to travel to reach the Northern States and Canada. There were hundreds of “stations” in towns and cities of the Confederate border states. Travelers would begin with the name of one person or place; after arriving at that place or contacting that person they would receive directions to the next “station.” Slowly, step by painful step, they secretly traveled north. The Railroad included the East and Midwest.

Using classroom, library or internet resources, research and discuss the routes of travel for the “Underground Railroad.” Plot the routes on a map, listing the dangers in each pathway. Were there towns and mountains to avoid? Rivers to cross? How many miles did the escaping slaves have to travel before they were safe?

Research and discuss how the travelers ate, slept and moved north in secret. Research the consequences for enslaved people who were captured and returned to the slave holders.

California Arts Standards: Artistic Processes

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

Learn more at:

ACTIVITIES TO ENHANCE THE EXPERIENCE:

Cn Discuss how the presentation of *Harriet Tubman*’s life and adventures interrelate to the time and place in which she lived. Discuss or list the events, lyrics or melodies seemed to transport you to that time period.

Cn Divide the class into two groups, asking them to imagine what it would be like to consider following the “General” to freedom in the North. Ask one group to make a list of reasons to go, and the other a list of reasons to stay. Partner students from opposite groups and ask them to practice discussing their “points of view.” Students can invent a relationship between their characters (mother and child, siblings, friends, etc.) and a compelling reason why they must leave (or stay) as soon as possible. (being sold to another plantation, being punished, etc.) Students should rehearse and present their discussion to the class. Students may alternate roles so they each experience both points of view. Discuss the “conversations” with the class.

Cn Ask students to pretend to be a newspaper reporter from *Harriet Tubman*’s time. They should make a list of questions to be used in interviewing her. They should be sure to include references to historical events (the Civil War, Harper’s Ferry, Fugitive Slave Law, Abolition) and people (John Brown, Frederick Douglass, William Seward.)

Cn Slave holders made it very difficult for enslaved people to escape, keeping them illiterate and unaware of the basic geography of the land around them. Some even tried to keep them from knowing which direction was north! However, enslaved people who yearned for freedom couldn’t be stopped; they found many ways to overcome these handicaps. Directions north were passed from plantation to plantation, often through songs (“Follow the Drinking Gourd,” which refers to the Big Dipper, the constellation that many followed on their journey north) or specially designed quilts (which were actually maps.) Thinking about the need for secrecy and the consequences if they were caught, what other ways do you think enslaved people may have passed information? Make a list of the real and presumed methods, and compare them to methods of secret communication used by other cultures.

SUGGESTED RESOURCES:

Clinton, Catherine, *Harriet Tubman: The Road to Freedom*. Little Brown & Co., 2004.

Petry, Ann, *Harriet Tubman: Conductor on the Underground Railroad*. Amistad., 2007.

Songs included in the performance:

“The Battle Hymn of the Republic”

“Go Down Moses”

“Follow the Drinking Gourd”

Contact Name: _____

Phone: _____

_____ AND THE MUSIC CENTER ANNOUNCE PAUL MORSE PRODUCTIONS TO PERFORM ON _____

_____ and The Music Center today announced the upcoming performance of *Letters to Harriet Tubman* 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.

Letters to Harriet Tubman, from Paul Morse Productions, uses songs and stories of the Civil war era to tell the adventures of the heroic woman who fought slavery through the "underground railroad." Harriet Tubman, born a slave, grew to become one of the foremost warriors in the battle against slavery, helping and guiding hundreds of slaves, including her own parents, travel north to freedom. In this two-character play, Harriet is joined by her guitar-playing neighbor, Jeffrey Taylor, Jr. The production examines the history of the main character and of the times, and is interspersed with lively period songs and African-American spirituals, including "Go Down, Moses," "Oh, Freedom" and "Battle Hymn of the Republic." A telling tale of the difference that can be made through the strength and courage of one individual, this performance inspires and encourages the audience to hope, dream and achieve.

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 Chorale, LA Opera and LA Phil. For more information, visit musiccenter.org. Follow The Music Center on Facebook, Instagram and X @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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Theatre
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Come To You

LETTERS TO HARRIET TUBMAN



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