

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

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

# **THE CHAMELEONS**

## The Wonder of Words

# 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. The Chameleons have performed their highly acclaimed programs for over one million children and adults all over the world, including North America, South America, Europe, Africa, and Asia. Please welcome mime artists Keith Berger and Sharon Diskin performing Mime Over Matter!"



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

- 20' wide x 20' deep minimum (portable stages are usually not acceptable)
- Portable stages must be sturdy and securely lashed with no gaps between planks of wood

## SURFACE

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

## DRESSING AREA

- One clean, secured dressing area will be needed either backstage or in the wings
- If dressing area is not adjacent to stage, a curtained or screened off area MUST be provided onstage
- The dressing area must be on the same level as the stage, so the performers can roll their chairs in and out of the area during the performance

## EQUIPMENT

- One microphone
- Electrical outlet and extension cord
  - Two chairs
  - Drinking water

## AUDIENCE SEATING

- Audience should be seated in front of the performers, not to the side

## ARRIVAL

- 60 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
- Audience should be in the venue, seated and ready to begin at the listed times

## THE CHAMELEONS— Mime Over Matter

**ART FORM:** Theatre

**STYLE:** Contemporary

**CULTURE:** American

### MEET THE ARTIST:

The Chameleons are a delightful mime duo composed of Keith Berger and Sharon Diskin. When they were children they didn't dream about being mimes, however each studied acting and appeared in dramatic productions. As teenagers they both attended a performance by world famous mime artist Marcel Marceau, who had an extraordinary ability to create characters without using words. Marceau's ability had tremendous impact upon each of them, opening their imagination up to a new world of expression and artistry. Keith sought formal training at The American Mime Theatre in New York City and became one of the very first street mimes. Sharon began her mime work with the Oberlin Mime Players. They met and began working as a team in 1985, and have since performed throughout Europe and North America. Their performance style features natural characters involved in real-life dramas in which strong emotions are expressed. The Chameleons are masters of traditional mime illusions and acclaimed for their original mime repertoire. Artistic collaborators, as well as husband and wife, their performances demonstrate that silence, indeed, is golden.

### ABOUT THE PERFORMANCE:

Words abound, words all around, everywhere a verb, adjective or noun! "The Wonder of Words" is a mime mystery about words. The Chameleons' captivating solo performance combines the magical actions of mime with the wonder of words to tell a story about a box of nouns mysteriously missing from the famous Wordheimer Library. Nimbus the Mime finds clues among the verbs and adjectives and, assisted by the audience, puts the clues together to solve the mystery. The performance is designed to create a strong association between actions and words. Three basic parts of speech—nouns, verbs and adjectives - are dramatized and referred to throughout the presentation so that their basic usage and functions become clear, even to the youngest children in the audience.

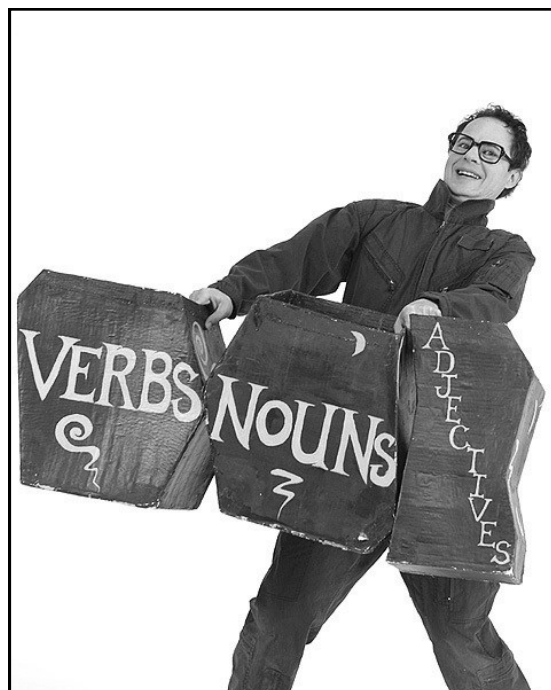
### PREPARING FOR THE EXPERIENCE:

Mime, one of the earliest forms for self-expression, was probably first used by ancient cultures as a way to express their adventures, myths and traditions. From the beginning, mimed actions were integral to the national theatres of Japan and China. In the West, mime established its own art form. Greek mime was farcical (in jest) in intent and performed during fall and spring theatre festivals. Roman mime evolved into exaggerated, often obscene, silent shows that were extremely popular.

During the Middle Ages, mime was performed by the traveling jester, who was the probable forerunner of today's comic mime performer. Mime was also presented in more subtle form in church dramas. The Renaissance brought a re-birth of mime as a significant dramatic form that was an important part of Italy's traveling Commedia dell'Arte. By 1800, mime was popular in many countries as dramatic entertainment. It was incorporated into the performances of the Noh theatre of Japan, and the melodramas of France and America.

In the 19th and 20th centuries, the French transformed the art form. Jean-Gaspard Debureau took what had once been crude and slapstick and turned mime into real theatre by creating stories with realistic scenes, fully developed characters, and plots about everyday life. His son began the formal teaching of mime as a systemized technique. After World War I, Etienne Decroux, a student of traditional mime, created a modern system of mime technique with theories, exercises, and specific illusions. His student, Marcel Marceau, inspired an international enthusiasm for the art form with a style based on exacting physical technique, simple, cleanly drawn movements, and the lovable 'Everyman' character, named Mr. Bip.

In 1952, Paul J. Curtis founded The American Mime Theatre in New York City. American mime, noted for its strong percussive physicality and its naturalistic playing, represents an exciting alternative to the traditional schools of mime.



## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

- What part of “The Wonder of Words” did you find most memorable? Why?
- What mime illusions did the performer use to tell the stories?
- How did the mime adjust his posture or movements to indicate the discovery of a clue? What did the mime do to indicate that he wanted assistance from the audience?
- What kinds of feelings or thoughts did you have as you watched the performance? Did you know what happened to the box of nouns or were you surprised?
- What do you think 'the wonder of words' means? Did you need words to understand the story?

## FRAMEWORK FOCUS—SCIENCE:

A mystery is a story that draws upon the detective’s brainpower, keen observation, intelligent guesswork, and ability to imagine and understand motives. “The Wonder of Words” is a mystery that can be used as a model for this writing exercise. Mysteries almost always involve a loss of some kind, a search for - and discovery of clues, witnesses, motives, and of course, a criminal.

Ask students to imagine a room in their home in very specific detail. What are the colors in the room? What kind of furniture, fabric, lighting, and objects are in that room? Are there pictures on the wall? Are there windows? Next, imagine walking into this room and discovering that something isn’t right. Look around, and realize that something very important is missing. What is it? What does the object mean to you?

State the problem or mystery, then invent the character who stole the object. Describe the character’s appearance and personality. What was their motive for stealing the object? Make up clues and a possible witness. Have students write the story of how they discovered the criminal. After the class has completed writing their stories, divide them into small groups to rehearse and perform their mysteries as mime theatre.

## ACTIVITIES TO ENHANCE THE EXPERIENCE:

**Cr** In “The Wonder of Words,” nouns and verbs are pantomimed. Have students develop their pantomime skills by exploring various nouns and verbs. On index cards, write a short pantomime scene. Have students choose a card and then create a short pantomime scene. Make sure to have a clear beginning and ending. Some suggestions are: get dressed; tie your shoes; make your bed; fly a kite; blow some bubbles.

**Pr** Have students imagine they are robots with no feelings or emotions. Their movement is stiff and limited to arms and legs moving at right angles and their eyes looking straight ahead. They can speak only in robot-like monotones. Next, have students slowly become human. They can move freely. They can turn their heads or wave their arms. They have feelings and can laugh or speak. Use their creative movement experience to generate writing in which students describe the differences in movement and expression in being a robot and a human. Ask which they liked best, and give reasons why.

**Cr** Creative writing comes both from the 'real world' and the imagination. Have students write a short paragraph about 'The Most Amazing Thing I’ve Never Seen.' They can write anything as fantastic or unlikely as their imaginations will allow. Then, re-orient the assignment by removing the letter 'N,' so they write about 'The Most Amazing Thing I’ve Ever Seen.' It must be something incredible, but real. Suggest they consider the everyday miracles we take for granted - the beauty found in nature, or the sight of a smile spreading across a loved one’s face.

**Pr** Have your students prepare a creative movement which involves the whole body. Guide them on a journey of the imagination by narrating an experience they can physically create. Begin by asking them to walk to the following words: *backward, forward, on their toes, on their heels, sad, happy, sneaky, afraid*. Next, have students walk over different surfaces - *slush, hot sand, ice, a sticky floor, mud*. Ask them to consider how their bodies change to express the different circumstances.

## SUGGESTED RESOURCES:

Schubert, Leda. *Monsieur Marceau: Action Without Words*. MacMillian Higher Education, 2012.

“American Mime.” The American Mime Theatre, The American Mime Theatre, [www.americanmime.org/](http://www.americanmime.org/).

“The Music Center’s Chameleons Artsource® Curriculum.” The Music Center, The Music Center, <https://tinyurl.com/chameleonsartsource>

“Scripts Based on Children’s Books.” Drama Notebook, [www.dramanotebook.com/plays-for-kids/scripts-based-on-childrens-books/](http://www.dramanotebook.com/plays-for-kids/scripts-based-on-childrens-books/).

### California Arts Standards: Artistic Processes

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

Learn more at:

<https://tinyurl.com/ArtsStandardsCA>

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

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

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**\_\_\_\_\_ AND THE MUSIC CENTER ANNOUNCE THE CHAMELEONS TO PERFORM ON \_\_\_\_\_**

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

The world-renowned Physical Theater duo called The Chameleons, also known as Keith Berger and Sharon Diskin, have captivated thousands of young people world-wide with their electrifying performances. Their highly acclaimed children's programs are a celebration of theatre magic, wonder and surprise. Magical electric stairways transport audiences through an amazing array of imaginary objects, characters and places. Through audience participation and observation, students are amazed to discover how far their imaginations -- and the Chameleons -- can take them.

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](http://musiccenter.org). Follow The Music Center on Facebook, Instagram and X @MusicCenterLA.

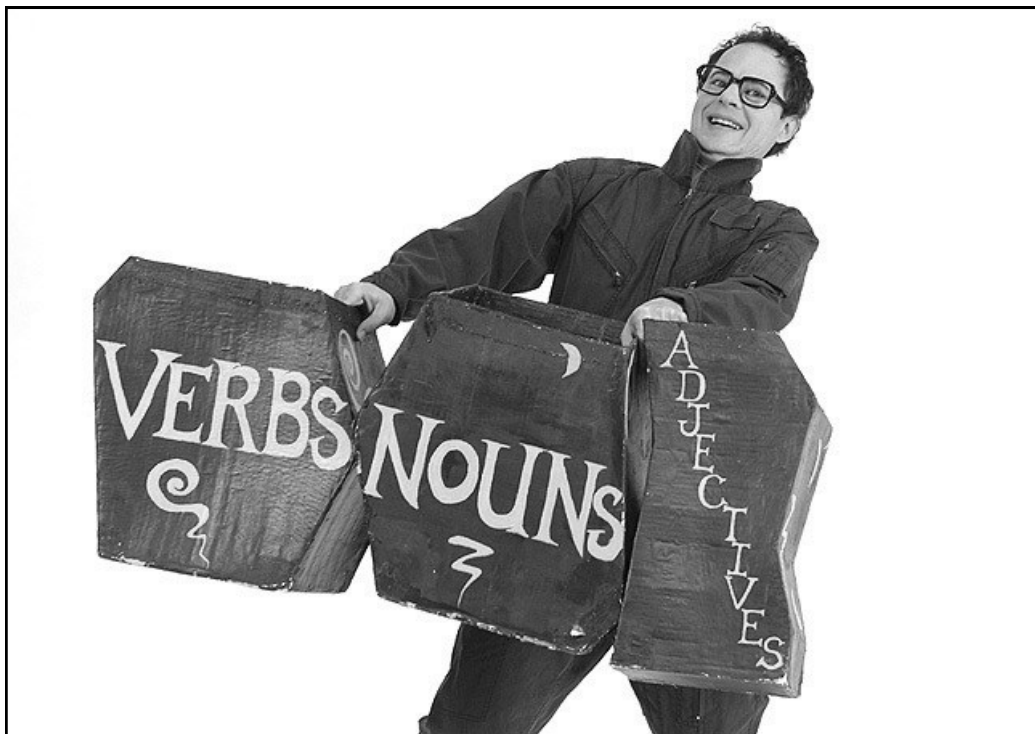
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*For more information, please contact The Music Center at 213-972-3332. Members of the media are welcome to cover this performance. Please contact The Music Center prior to sending a reporter or photographer to the school.*

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# THE CHAMELEONS



**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, 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](http://www.musiccenter.org)