Jake Shimabukuro, ukulele
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JAKE SHIMABUKURO
UKULELE

Wednesday, November 19, 11 am
Hill Auditorium
Thank You!

Thank you for your interest in learning about or attending one of our UMS School Day Performances.
Attend

Coming to your E-mail Inbox!

Map and Driving Directions
Logistical Details (drop-off/pick-up locations)
Venue Information
THE DETAILS

VENUE ADDRESS
Hill Auditorium, 825 North University Avenue, Ann Arbor, MI 48109

EMERGENCY CONTACT NUMBER
734-764-2538

ARRIVAL TIME
Between 10:30-10:50am

TICKETS
We do not use paper tickets for School Day Performances. We hold school reservations at the door and seat groups upon arrival.

FOOD
No food or drinks (including school lunches) are allowed in the theater.

ACCESSIBILITY
We aim to maximize accessibility at our performances and below are details regarding this performance’s points of accessibility. If you have further questions e-mail umsyouth@umich.edu or call 734-615-0122.

WHEELCHAIR ACCESSIBILITY
Courtesy wheelchairs are available for audience members. Hill Auditorium is wheelchair accessible and has 12 seats for audience members with special needs.

PARKING
There is handicapped parking very close to the Power Center on Fletcher Street and in the parking structure behind the Power Center on Palmer Drive. The first three levels of the Palmer Drive structure have 5 parking spots on each level next to each elevator. There are a total of 15 parking spaces in the garage.

BATHROOMS
ADA compliant toilets are available in the green room (east corner) of the Hill Auditorium for both men and women.

ENTRY
The front doors are not powered; however, there will be an usher at that door opening it for all patrons. There is a ramp entrance on the west side of the auditorium.
Learn

Jake Shimabukuro, ukulele
Growing up in Hawaii, Jake Shimabukuro didn’t realize that making a living as a touring ukulele player was even possible — with a range of just two octaves and a limited menu of tone colors, the instrument is not usually played by star-studded soloists. Shimabukuro forges a new path with dazzling technical and artistic virtuosity, and the ukulele’s physical limits fuel rather than stifle his creativity. Shimabukuro has catalyzed the worldwide ukulele renaissance of the past several years. The ukulele’s growing popularity is readily apparent: children and adults are picking up the instrument in huge numbers; ukulele clubs are popping up around the world; and YouTube is full of ukulele covers no doubt inspired by Shimabukuro.

At the same time, Shimabukuro embraces the ukulele’s accessibility, capitalizing on its unintimidating nature to hook children and adults on learning music. “You don’t have to be a musician to play the ukulele,” says Shimabukuro, “it’s so simple, it’s easy; you can play a whole song with one finger.”

Shimabukuro is a rare combination of artistic renegade and musical ambassador. His passion for his instrument is equally evident when stretching technical boundaries as when he is teaching a roomful of students basic chords. We hope that Shimabukuro’s captivating passion will inspire students at the School Day Performance to learn more about — and maybe even pick up — the ukulele.
WHY?

ONLINE: CONNECTING TO THE PERFORMANCE

Listen to this Spotify playlist exploring Jake Shimabukuro’s work and the art of the ukulele.
ARTIST

JAKE SHIMABUKURO: FIVE THINGS TO KNOW

01

The ukulele is a Polynesian version of the guitar that arrived in Hawaii via Portugal during the 19th century. Roughly translated, its name means “jumping flea,” which may describe the player’s dancing fingers. While mainly associated with Hawaiian music, the instrument is popular worldwide thanks to its charm and accessibility. Most ukuleles have four strings, but some (called “taropatch ukuleles”) have six or eight strings, with the added strings tuned in unisons or octaves for extra resonance.

02

Jake Shimabukuro hit international music scene after his cover of The Beatles’ “While My Guitar Gently Weeps” was uploaded to YouTube without his knowledge in 2006. It soon became one of the site’s first truly viral videos and has been viewed more than 13 million times to date.

03

Shimabukuro’s brother, Bruce, is also a virtuoso ukulele player. The siblings often collaborate musically, and Bruce composed and appeared on the track “Ukulele Bros” on Jake’s latest album.

04

Shimabukuro is the creator of the Four Strings Foundation, which is dedicated to the promotion of music education in U.S. public schools. He says, “The ukulele is the perfect tool to teach kids how to appreciate music and to teach them music concepts.” The foundation’s mission is to encourage passion, expression, community, and happiness through music. Visit http://fourstringsfoundation.org for more information.

05

Shimabukuro is the subject of the 2012 PBS documentary “Life on Four Strings,” which explores how his modest upbringing in a single parent home led to international musical success. The film is currently available for streaming on Netflix.
Go behind the scenes of Shimabukuro’s tour in this video.

In addition, follow Jake on Twitter at @JakeShimabukuro
Shimabukuro draws material from a variety of sources, and is a master of three different but linked ways of generating music: composition, arrangement, and transcription.

**ARRANGEMENT**

A musician creates an arrangement (also called a “cover”) as a way of bringing new flavors to a previously composed piece. Arrangements typically retain some of the original composition’s rhythmic, harmonic, and melodic frameworks, but use different instruments and unique musical concepts to create a fresh interpretation.

**TRANSCRIPTION**

A transcription is a type of arrangement intended to be extremely faithful to the original work. Transcriptions typically involve a piece changing instrumentation, being notated in a new key, or, in the case of folk music or improvised solos, being written down for the first time. Transcriptions still bring new ideas to a previously composed piece, but with less freedom than arrangement or composition.

**COMPOSITION**

Composition is the creation of brand new musical material. While no artist can be free of outside artistic influence, composers seek to generate music that is completely unique.
Arrangement:
In arranging Queen’s “Bohemian Rhapsody,” Shimabukuro faced the challenge of reducing a song written for four people (and recorded on more than 100 separate tracks) for the tiny ukulele. But even the most complex music is no match for Shimabukuro’s virtuosity, as delivered in this TED Talk/performance.

Transcription:
In this video, Shimabukuro plays a transcription of Bach’s Invention No. 4 in D minor and speaks about the challenges and rewards of playing Bach on ukulele.

Composition:
Jake Shimabukuro performs his own composition “143 (Kelly’s Song).”
“IF EVERYONE PLAYED THE UKULELE, THE WORLD WOULD BE A MUCH HAPPIER PLACE.”

- JAKE SHIMABUKURO
In his young career, Hawaiian ukulele wizard Jake Shimabukuro has already redefined a heretofore under-the-radar instrument, been declared a musical “hero” by *Rolling Stone*, earned comparisons to Jimi Hendrix and Miles Davis, and even played in front of the Queen of England. Known for his lightning-fast fingers and innovative style, Shimabukuro collaborated on his latest record with legendary producer/engineer Alan Parsons, best known for his work on Pink Floyd’s *Dark Side of the Moon* and The Beatles’ *Abbey Road*. Shimabukuro became internationally famous when his video of George Harrison’s “While My Guitar Gently Weeps” was posted on YouTube without his knowledge and became one of the first viral videos on the site. In addition to traditional ukulele material, his singular approach to the instrument combines elements of jazz, blues, funk, rock, bluegrass, classical, swing, and flamenco. A UMS debut.
To learn more about the ukulele, check out UMS’s infographic on the history of the instrument.
BEING AN AUDIENCE MEMBER
WATCHING AND LISTENING

When preparing to attend a live performing arts event, we hope you will think about the concepts of concert conduct and manners. This is not just about saying “please” and “thank you;” rather, it’s like an unspoken agreement you have with everyone else in the performance space, to be thoughtful and considerate in what you do so that everyone can fully engage with the unique and exciting live performance experience. Here’s what we mean:

YOUR SURROUNDINGS

• Concert halls and performing arts venues are some of the most grand and beautiful buildings you might ever visit, so be sure to look around while you follow an usher to your group’s seats or once you are in your seat.

• UMS Ushers will be stationed throughout the building and are identifiable by their big name badges. They are there to help you be as comfortable as possible and if you have a question (about the performance, about where to go, or about what something is), please ask them, and don’t feel shy, embarrassed, or hesitant in doing so.

SHARING THE PERFORMANCE HALL WITH OTHER AUDIENCE MEMBERS

• Consider whether any talking you do during the performance will prevent your seat neighbors or other audience members from hearing. Often in large rock concerts or movie theaters, the sound is turned up so loud that you can talk and not disturb anyone’s listening experience. However, in other concerts and live theater experiences, the sound is unamplified (or just quiet), and the smallest noise could cause your seat neighbor to miss an important line of dialogue or musical phrase. Lights (from a cell phone or music player, for instance) and movements (body wiggling or shaking) may also distract your neighbors’ attention away from the stage, again, causing them to miss important action...and there’s no instant replay in live performance!

• At a performance, you are sharing a small physical space with other audience members. So, consider whether you are sharing — the arm rest and the leg room, for instance — in such a way that both you and your neighbors are comfortable.

• As an audience member, you are also part of the performance. Any enthusiasm you might have for the performance may help the performers perform better. So, if you like what you are seeing, make sure they know it! Maybe clap, hoot and holler, or stand up and cheer. However, when expressing your own personal enjoyment of the performance, consider whether your fellow audience members will be able to see or hear what’s happening on stage or whether they will miss something because of the sound and movement you are making. Given this consideration, it’s often best to wait until a pause in the performance (a pause of sound, movement, or energy) or to wait until the performer(s) bow to the audience to share your enthusiasm with them.

• Out of respect for the performer(s), if you do not like some part of the performance, please do not boo or shout anything derogatory. Remember, a lot of hard work went in to creating the performance you are watching and it takes great courage for the performer to share his or her art with you.

SHARE YOUR EXPERIENCE WITH OTHERS

• An important part of any performing arts experience is sharing it with others. This can include whispering to your seat neighbor during the performance, talking to your friends about what you liked and didn’t like on the bus back to school, or telling your family about the performance when you get home.

Special thanks to Emily Barkakati for her role in developing this resource.
BEING AN AUDIENCE MEMBER
RULES AND TOOLS

We share the following “Rules and Tools” to help audience members at UMS School Day Performances connect with the performance and environment around them. As a general suggestion, we encourage audience members to Notice, Feel, and Interpret.

1. BE PRESENT.
Being bored means you’re not engaging. In the performance, you might feel any of the following:
- happy
- sorrow
- pain
- horror
- inspiration
- confused
- pride
- content
- joy
- sad
- beauty
- enlightened

The beauty of live performance is the connection between the audience and artist and the energy they share and pass between each other. Have you ever given a presentation and spoken better because people in the room were smiling at you? You have an ability to affect the performance as an audience member and we encourage you to use it during the performance.

2. INTERPRET: YOU CAN CHOOSE WHAT IT MEANS.
Sometimes an artist will share what the performance is supposed to mean or share the performance’s story. Sometimes there won’t be a story or any meaning beyond creating movement or sound. Either way, feel empowered choosing what the performance means to you or imagine your own story... you can change your mind at any point too.

3. CHECK YOUR OWN EMOTIONS & FEELINGS.
Ask yourself: How am I feeling? Am I tired, sore, in a bad mood, sad, upset, sick, etc.? These feelings and emotions can affect how you perceive the performance. Be open to letting the performance improve your condition or make you think differently or more deeply about your condition.

“ IF SOMETHING IS BORING AFTER TWO MINUTES, TRY IT FOR FOUR. IF STILL BORING, THEN EIGHT. THEN SIXTEEN. THEN THIRTY-TWO. EVENTUALLY ONE DISCOVERS THAT IT IS NOT BORING AT ALL. ”

- JOHN CAGE, COMPOSER

(Renowned composer John Cage is simply saying sometimes it takes a little longer than expected to find a point of personal interest in a performance, so don’t give up the search too quick.)
CONNECT

BEING AN AUDIENCE MEMBER

RULES AND TOOLS

QUESTIONS
The following questions are used during TalkOut* and can help audience members connect with or reflect on a performance:
• How does this performance relate to where I live?
• What does this performance remind me of?
• What moment in the performance will I remember?
• What question will I ask my teacher back at school?


ELEMENTS
At any point during a performance, you should feel empowered to notice or focus on any element of the performance — on stage or off stage.

SPACE:
venue/building, stage, distance between objects

LIGHTING:
location of light, use of darkness, color of light, movement of light, light in the audience

SOUND:
sound created by voices or movements of performers or audience members, the location of sound (behind the audience or off stage), use of musical instruments or recorded music

MOVEMENT:
movement of performers, images, objects, or audience members; speed, size, or shape of movements

PEOPLE:
performers or audience members, the number of people, type and amount of clothing on people, facial or emotional expressions of people

POEM
Consider how the poem below relates to your field trip, the performance venue, or the performance:

“Museum Piece” by Richard Wilbur
The good gray guardians of art
Patrol the halls on spongy shoes,
Impartially protective, though
Perhaps suspicious of Toulouse.

Here dozes one against the wall,
Disposed upon a funeral chair.
A Degas dancer pirouettes
Upon the parting of his hair.

See how she spins! The grace is there,
But strain as well is plain to see.
Degas loved the two together:
Beauty joined to energy.

Edgar Degas purchased once
A fine El Greco, which he kept
Against the wall beside his bed
To hang his pants on while he slept.

Special thanks to Emily Barkakati, Sigal Hemy, Jim Leija, Lisa Murray, and Anna Prushinskaya for their roles in developing this resource.
Consider the following suggestions and ideas when searching for information online.

**Triangulate and Form Opinions Slowly**
When looking for information online:

1. Search, search again, and then search again.
2. Then compare information from your searches.
3. Then search one more time based on what you’ve discovered in your comparison.

**Seek Out Identifiable Sources**
Reputable articles, journals, or magazines should cite an author whose identity can be verified and cite a list of sources, either throughout the piece or in a bibliography.

**Check the Date**
Consider whether the content is old or outdated. Has the site been maintained?

**Look for Bias**
Is the site or its author’s objective to sell you something? Is the site’s content overly positive or negative? Does the site’s content lean toward only one viewpoint? Does the site’s content clearly omit facts? If your answer to any of these questions is yes, then the site might not represent a reliable information source.

**Beware**
- Sites with an abundance of advertising, especially ads that look cheap, are neon and blinking, or constantly pop up on the screen
- Sites with grammar, spelling, and formatting errors

**Note:** Good looking sites don’t necessarily have fair, unbiased, or accurate information (for instance, sites for political candidates are often beautiful, but contain information that ONLY portrays their candidate positively).
ARTS ONLINE: EXPLORE AND DISCOVER

SITES WE SUGGEST

GO TO THE SOURCE

If searching for information about an artist or organization, first try visiting their homepage where they are likely to post information, links, and media they approve.

For instance:
- Wynton Marsalis - www.WyntonMarsalis.com
- Hubbard Street Dance Chicago - www.HubbardStreetDance.com
- UMS - www.UMS.org

RELIABLE SITES (GENERALLY):

- .EDU educational institutions
- .GOV government (particularly good for statistics and reports)
- .ORG organizations (though, only those without a political bias or advocacy agenda)

SEARCHING FOR VIDEO

You will find the best videos online when you search for ones posted by the artist or posted by the “generally reliable” sites having the characteristics detailed in this document. Avoid bootleg videos posted by random individuals with no relationship to the artist, as the video might not be representative of the artist’s work.

LESSON PLAN SOURCES

The following sites have a variety of standards-based lesson plans for teachers and interactive learning resources for families that celebrate an art form, connect the arts to the full range of non-arts subjects, or offer cultural context for the global arts.

- ARTSEDGE
  www.ArtsEdge.org
- PBS
  www.pbslearningmedia.org
- NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC
  www.education.nationalgeographic.com
- EDSITEMENT
  http://edsitement.neh.gov

THREE ‘GO TO’ SITES

The following sites are consistently good and reliable sources of information about arts and culture.

- THE NEW YORK TIMES
  www.nytimes.com
- THE GUARDIAN
  www.theguardian.com
- NATIONAL PUBLIC RADIO (NPR)
  www.npr.org

VISIT UMS

Let us do the work for you! Visit our sites www.ums.org and www.umslobby.org for great and engaging videos, blog posts, photos, and web links about artists and art forms.
RECOMMENDED READING

TEENS

The following listing of literature for teens and youth was developed by the Ann Arbor District Library to connect to the 2014-2015 UMS School Day Performance Series. All titles are in circulation at the library. For more information about the Ann Arbor District Library and their programs for youth, teens, teachers and schools, visit www.aadl.org.

**JAKE SHIMABUKURO, UKULELE**

*The Ukulele: A Visual History* by Jim Beloff
This unique text offers a history of the ukulele, how it has entered popular culture, and a resource guide for learning the instrument.

*Jake Shimabukuro: Life on Four Strings (DVD)*
Follow Shimabukuro on his musical tours and see his hometown in Hawai‘i.

*Island World: A History of Hawai‘i and the United States* by Gary Y. Okihiro
Okihiro depicts an eclectic cultural history of Hawai‘i and its history of interaction with the United States.

**eighth blackbird**

*Music: An Illustrated History, an Encyclopedia of Musical Instruments and the Art of Music-making* by Max Wade-Matthews
Learn about the instruments Eighth Blackbird plays and the composers that influence their current work.

*The Rest is Noise: Listening to the Twentieth Century* by Alex Ross
Photographs and approachable prose provide valuable insight into popular classical and jazz music of the last century.

*Art Attack: A Short Cultural History of the Avant-Garde* by Marc Aronson
This resource pairs modern art with analogous contemporary music for an enlightening artistic experience.

**COMPAGNIE NON NOVA:**

*PRELUDE TO THE AFTERNOON OF A FOEHN*

*Theater Geek: The Real Life Drama of a Summer at Stagedoor Manor, the Famous Performing Arts Camp* by Mickey Rapkin
Experience a typical summer through the eyes of three teen musical performers.

**Claude Debussy by Paul Roberts**
Learn about Debussy, the classical composer whose work is featured in the Compagnie Non Nova performance.

Read about how art has progressed through the 20th century and into the present.

**KYLE ABRAHAM/ABRAHAM IN MOTION**

*Dancers Among Us: A Celebration of Joy in the Everyday* by Jordan Matter
This book of photos features dancers going through their everyday lives, doing everyday things, in motion.

*In the Wings: Behind the Scenes at the New York City Ballet* by Kyle Forman
Discover what it is like to be a dancer in the New York City Ballet through color photographs and personal anecdotes.

*Streb: How to Become an Extreme Action Hero* by Elizabeth Streb
Read about Elizabeth Streb’s incredible feats of strength and opposition to gravity through modern dance.

**OLIVER MTUKUDZI AND THE BLACK SPIRITS**

*We Need New Names* by NoViolet Bulawayo
Darling, a preteen living under a harsh regime and poverty in Zimbabwe, receives the opportunity to move to Michigan. However, once she arrives, Darling begins to feel conflicted between the luxury of her new home and the nostalgia of her old one.

*The NPR Curious Listener’s Guide to World Music* by Chris Nickson
Discover music from countries all over the world in several genres and through various composers, featuring a section on music from Zimbabwe.

*Love in the Driest Season: A Family Memoir* by Neely Tucker
When his job as a journalist takes him and his wife to Zimbabwe, Neely Tucker shares his experiences in a war-torn country while attempting to adopt a child.
**RECOMMENDED READING**

**YOUTH**

**JAKE SHIMABUKURO, UKULELE**

*Ukulele Hayley* by Judy Cox  
When the school board decides to stop funding the music program, Haley decides to join together with her band friends to keep it afloat.

*Roots and Blues: A Celebration* by Arnold Adoff  
Read about the blues style and its reflection of American history through powerful poetry and paintings.

*Musical Instruments (How Things Work Series)* by Ade Deane-Pratt  
This hands-on book introduces main instrument families with a “How does it work?” section for each group and provides instructions for making your own instruments with household objects.

**eighth blackbird**

*Long Live Music! (Creative Editions Series)* by Chats Peles  
The history of humankind and music through the ages is presented amid eye-catching illustrations in a picture-book format.

*The History of Classical Music* by Stuart A. Kallen  
This informative resource details the life of Bach and other famous composers, characterizes different eras of music, and features photographs of historical artifacts.

*Zin! Zin! Zin!: A Violin* by Lloyd Moss  
Ten instruments representing different musical families are introduced individually with colorful illustrations as they join the orchestra on stage.

**COMPAGNIE NON NOVA: PRELUDE TO THE AFTERNOON OF A FOEHN**

*Modern Dance* by Andrew Solway  
This educational book introduces basic concepts of modern dance and how it was widely influenced by Stravinsky’s “Rite of Spring.”

*When Stravinsky Met Nijinsky: Two Artists, Their Ballet, and One Extraordinary Riot* by Lauren Stringer  
Read about the true story of a composer and choreographer who revolutionized dance and performance art in 1913.

**On Stage: Theater Games and Activities for Kids** by Lisa Bany-Winters  
Practice fun theater and drama exercises, design your own props, and engage your audience with this hands-on resource for teachers and students.

**KYLE ABRAHAM/ABRAHAM.IN.MOTION**

*A Child’s Introduction to Ballet: The Stories, Music and Magic of Classical Dance* by Laura Lee  
This first look at ballet and its history is accompanied by a music CD for supplemental learning.

*Nelson Mandela* by Kadir Nelson  
Full-spread color paintings introduce Mandela and the apartheid he fought against to secure his nation’s freedom. The apartheid in South Africa strongly influences Kyle Abraham’s performance.

*The Emancipation Proclamation* by Marianne McComb  
Read about the Civil War, Abraham Lincoln, and the Emancipation Proclamation with the full-text document and a helpful glossary. Kyle Abraham’s performance reflects the Emancipation Proclamation.

**OLIVER MTUKUDZI AND THE BLACK SPIRITS**

*African and Asian Dance* by Andrew Solway  
Discover traditional folk music, costumes, and dance in African and Asian countries.

*A Girl Named Disaster* by Nancy Farmer  
When Nhamo is destined to marry a cruel man, she narrowly escapes to her father’s village in Zimbabwe. Her harrowing story of survival is both heartwrenching and gripping.

*Tokoloshi: African Folktales Retold* by Diana Pitcher  
This compendium for kids features engaging folktales from southern Africa.
A LETTER TO PERFORMERS
Primary Audience: Elementary School Students

BEFORE THE PERFORMANCE
Before you attend the performance, make a list of what you already know about the following things:

1. Live Performances
2. The Art Form
3. The Artist(s)
4. Origin of the Art Form or Artist(s)

DURING THE PERFORMANCE
To help you organize your observations during the performance, consider the following:

I Notice...
I Feel...
I Wonder...

Once the performance is done, write down your notes as soon as possible (either on the bus or back in the classroom) to help you remember your observations of the performance.

AFTER THE PERFORMANCE
Use your observations to help you write a letter to the performer(s). Remember, these artists are real people who want to know what audiences think about their work. This letter is your opportunity to share your impressions with the people who created the art you just experienced.

When starting your letter, be sure to use a greeting like “Dear [performer’s name]!” Next, be sure to tell the performer(s) where and when you saw them. Every live performance is different, so it will help them to know which show you are talking about. Then you can use the notes you took about the performance to share your experience with the performer(s). At the end of your letter, be sure to include any other information—about yourself or the performance you saw—that you think the performer(s) would like to know. To finish the letter, include a closing like “Your fan” or “Thank you!” and then sign your name. Your teacher or parent can help you find the best way to get your letter to the performer!
WRITING ABOUT LIVE PERFORMANCE

TWO THUMBS UP: WRITING A REVIEW FOR PUBLICATION
Primary Audience: Middle and High School Students

BEFORE THE PERFORMANCE
Imagine your local newspaper has asked you to write a review of the event you are going to see: this will be your opportunity to write an argument about your opinions and explain your reasoning. Reviewers attempt to sort through the feelings they’re already having in advance of a performance—not to put those feelings aside, but rather so that they are aware of what effect pre-performance opinions may have on the review.

Before the performance begins, answer the following questions:
• What expectations do I have for the performance?
• Do I already have an opinion about what I will experience at the performance?
(Additionally, consider the some of the Questions and Elements outlined in the “Being an Audience Member” section of this guide.)

DURING THE PERFORMANCE
During the performance, take mental notes about the performance—the key is making a little note of something of interest while being aware of the entirety of the performance. As soon possible after the performance ends, write down (using whatever paper or electronic device is handy) thoughts and words that come to mind related to the performance.

Things to consider:
• What is striking to me?
• Is it vastly different from what I thought it would be?
• Has the venue transformed into something else during the performance? How?
• Are there images or ideas popping into my head? What are they?
• Is there something about the performance I may remember forever? What made it so?
• Is the audience quiet and drawn in to what is happening? Are they loud? Are they interacting directly with the performers? Are the performers directly interacting with the audience?

AFTER THE PERFORMANCE
After the performance has concluded—back in class, riding home on the bus, or back at home—think back on what you just saw; it’s like looking at the performance in a rear-view mirror. Take the list of words and thoughts you wrote and compare it with the words you wrote beforehand. Now, remove all the words that came up twice. These words, the most obvious ones that come to mind, are off limits (you can use synonyms), but the remainders will help you remember how you felt about the performance. Take these less obvious words and expand upon them. In the first draft of your review get all of your ideas down on paper. Make sure to include your thoughts on the performance and how they may have changed, stayed the same, or morphed into new feelings. Discuss any preconceptions you may have had and how they changed or stayed the same after viewing the performance.

When you’re ready to work on your second draft, read back through your writing and try to identify the main idea of your review—what themes keep coming up? What is the tone? What do you ultimately feel about the performance? Use that main idea to come up with a hook (a bold, attention-getting statement to set the review in motion and give your readers a sense of what’s to come).

Things to consider:
Remember — this review will take a stance on the performance based on the ways you’ve interpreted the elements you considered before, during, and after the show. Your teacher, parents, or friends (or a broader audience if you’re writing for a newspaper) are very interested in your thoughts about the performance, and you can pretend they’re on the fence about it—try and persuade them over to your side with your views about the performance. Don’t be afraid to make strong statements—just be sure you can back up your argument with evidence you collected throughout the performance! A cold, play-by-play of exactly what happened isn’t fun to read, and it doesn’t let the readers, who likely didn’t get to see the same performance that you did, use their imaginations to tell the story and fill in some (but not all) of the blanks.
WRITING ABOUT LIVE PERFORMANCE

THE SUN IS RED NOISE: POETRY ABOUT PERFORMANCE
Primary audience: Elementary, Middle, High School Students

In white pleated trousers, peering through green sunshades, looking for the way the sun is red noise, how locusts hiss to replicate the sun.
–Elizabeth Alexander, from “Stravinsky in LA”

The poem excerpted above and “Museum Piece,” the poem by Richard Wilbur at the beginning of this guide are examples of ekphrastic poetry. Ekphrastic poetry is written in response to a piece of art, theatrical performance, writing, or music. The poem can be written about art, from the point of view of a character or the artist, or about the experience of viewing/hearing the art.

BEFORE THE PERFORMANCE
• Think about the way you describe the music that you like to a friend. How would you describe your favorite song to someone who had never heard it? How about to someone who could not hear?
• List the tools in your poetry toolbox (description, simile, metaphor, and imagery) that will help you describe the art in new ways.

DURING THE PERFORMANCE
Keep a record of:
• Words and phrases that come to mind in response to performance.
• Feelings you had about the art, the stage, the audience, the event.
• Images (like colors, ideas, memories, smells) that came to mind while you were listening to the music.
• Songs/images/ideas repeated throughout the performance.

AFTER THE PERFORMANCE
Younger students:
Pick one thing that you heard or saw in the performance and try to describe it in a new way to someone who wasn’t at the performance. Use all five senses in your descriptions. Even if you didn’t smell something, what do you imagine the art could smell like?

Older students:
• For five minutes straight (time can be adapted based on age group), write down everything you can remember about the performance you attended. Every detail that comes to mind is an important one.
• Take at least three things that you remember and create an image around each of them with using some of the tools in your poetry toolbox.
• Use one (or all) of these three images to start your poem about the performance. If it made you feel a certain way (happy, angry, afraid, alone, joyful), use words and images that match that mood to start. What kinds of words and images would you use to write a joyful poem? A lonely one?
• Can you use repetition in the poem in the same way it was used in the music you heard? If you saw a play, can you use language that reflects what you heard?
• Imagine you are the artist who created/composed the work of art on the day you were inspired to create it. What did you see, hear, smell, taste, touch, experience? Write a poem that takes us through that day, using the images you’ve crafted already.

Special thanks to Catherine Colabro, Erin Mernoff, Jeremy Peters, David Riva, and Kati Shanks for their roles in developing this resource.
One of the oldest performing arts presenters in the country, UMS is committed to connecting audiences with performing artists from around the world in uncommon and engaging experiences. With a program steeped in music, dance, and theater, UMS contributes to a vibrant cultural community by presenting approximately 60–75 performances and over 100 free educational activities each season. UMS also commissions new work, sponsors artist residencies, and organizes collaborative projects with local, national, and international partners.

Learning is core to UMS’s mission, and it is our joy to provide creative learning experiences for our entire community. Each season, we offer a fun and fascinating lineup of workshops, artist Q&As, conversations, and interactive experiences to draw you in and out of your comfort zone, connect you to interesting people and unexpected ideas, and bring you closer to the heart of the artistic experience. We exist to create a spark in people, young and old alike, exposing them to things they haven’t seen before, and leaving them with a lifelong passion for creativity and the performing arts.
ABOUT UMS
2014-2015 SCHOOL DAY PERFORMANCES

JAKE SHIMABUKURO, UKULELE
Wednesday, November 19, 11 am

EIGHTH BLACKBIRD
Friday, January 16, 11 am

SPHINX COMPETITION HONORS CONCERT
Friday, January 30, 12 pm

COMPAGNIE NON NOVA
Friday, February 13, 11 am

KYLE ABRAHAM/ABRAHAM.IN.MOTION
Thursday, March 12, 10:30 am and 12:30 pm

OLIVER MTUKUDZI AND THE BLACK SPIRITS
Friday, April 17, 11 am
THANK YOU!
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THE PRODUCT OF THE UMS
EDUCATION AND COMMUNITY
ENGAGEMENT PROGRAM.

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EDITED BY
Shannon K. Fitzsimons

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