



Milbre Burch

Milbre Burch is a GRAMMY-nominated, spoken-word recording artist, an internationally known Oracle-Award-winning storyteller, and a sought-after teaching artist. The preeminent interpreter of Jane Yolen stories, she has taught and performed across the US, Europe and Asia since 1978.

She has created nationally recognized residencies, workshops and pre-conferences, as well as locally lauded community outreach events. A produced and published playwright, Milbre holds a PhD in theatre and performance studies from the University of Missouri.

She is dedicated to addressing issues of diversity, equity and inclusion, to working for peace and justice and reconciliation, and to speaking the truth of women's experiences.

BACKGROUND

As a movement-trained solo performer, Milbre studied with Doris Humphrey protégé Meli Kaye and Etienne Decroux-trained Tony Montanaro.

Her mentors in the storytelling community include some of the foremothers of the American storytelling revival. From Carol Birch and Elizabeth Ellis, she learned the power of the spoken word and the eloquence of what's left unsaid. Heather Forest and Gwenda LedBetter deepened her understanding that the personal is political and that storytelling is a lifelong pursuit. Laura Simms taught her that the stories we live through and those we find shape our lives. And Gioia Timpanelli demonstrated how deeply entrancing the work can be for both the teller and the listener.

Milbre has worked in schools, libraries, community, residential and correctional settings; coffee houses; castles; art museums; black boxes and proscenium theatres; churches; synagogues; hospitals; and senior centers. She has been featured at folk music, storytelling and theatre festivals in 36 states, and eighteen cities in Austria, Spain, Ireland, England, and Taiwan.

She has taught classes in public speaking, adaptation of literature, communication and American classroom culture at the University of Missouri, and children's speech arts at California State University-Los Angeles.

Commission her for customized performances, keynote presentations, lecture demonstrations, master-classes and workshops to suit your needs.

ARTIST STATEMENT

I was a mime who grew tired of the quiet. The crossroads of language and gesture is where I planted my roots as a kinetic storyteller back in the eighties. Though I also perform literary stories, original fiction and character monologues, global folktales have driven my work for almost forty years and counting.

An oral culture keeps its treasure on its tongue and even a culture that relies on print and electronic media to tell many of its stories would be wise to remember how to listen deeply and to speak from the heart.



A woman's voice is a mighty voice.

PERFORMANCES

Virtual performances are available as live-streams or pre-recorded.

Socially-distanced live performances in appropriate settings are also available.

Milbre is happy to provide a post-show talkback, moderated by a member of your community, for any of her shows.

TALES FROM BEYOND THE BAN: FOLKTALES FROM LIBYA, IRAN, IRAQ, SOMALIA, SUDAN, SYRIA, AND YEMEN

In January 2017, citizens from seven predominantly-Muslim countries were banned from entry to the United States. Weaving oral histories of exclusion with folktales of hospitality and resilience, Milbre Burch invites you to share the wisdom of ancient cultures as they teach us how to be human in an inhospitable world. (75-minute performance)

AUDIENCE RESPONSE

"When you tell the story of Nazneen and open the box, and there is a bridge between this world and the other world – these stories do the same thing for us, take us to these beautiful memories, take us to our country, and I am grateful."

– Azadeh Vatanpour

"Thank you for being a voice about the injustice we've experienced."

– Mojtaba Khajeloo

CHANGING SKINS: TALES ABOUT GENDER, IDENTITY AND HUMANITY

Explore a world of stories about the fluidity of gender. Contemporary stories and traditional tales from Armenia, Chile, India and Scotland, from the Inuit, Ojibway and Okanagan traditions, and from the Maasai of East Africa remind us that human beings have long considered a continuum between he and she. (75-minute performance)

AUDIENCE RESPONSE

"Refreshingly brave. We were on this journey and it became an adventure."

– Allison Downey, artist and educator

"Excellent performance, the kind of humanities-based program I hope we can offer on a regular basis."

– Mark Livengood, Story Center Director, Mid-continent Public Library

SOMETIMES I SING

Travel back to 1902 with a young female reporter to the Women's Ward of the Anamosa State Penitentiary in Iowa, where you'll meet Minnie Wright, serving a life sentence for the murder of her abusive husband. Combining the distance of history with emotional immediacy, *Sometimes I Sing* indicts the systems that still keep battered women in abusive environments, even today. (35-minute performance)

AUDIENCE RESPONSE

"Milbre Burch will hold you spellbound in Sometimes I Sing."

– Bill Clark, Columbia (Missouri) Daily Tribune

"Sometimes I Sing is a theatrical tour de force."

– Patricia L. Bryan, author of *Midnight Assassin*

"Thank you for your work on behalf of our friends and neighbors who continue to suffer in the shackles of violence."

– Heather Harlan, Phoenix Programs, Columbia, Missouri

THE MOON AND BEYOND: NIGHT SKY STORIES FROM AROUND THE WORLD

Travel around the world in this family-friendly performance, as Milbre tells folktales from Botswana, Brazil, Estonia, India, and Turkey. These oral tales explain– in metaphorical terms – the origins of some of the celestial bodies and phenomena that human beings have observed in the sky since the beginning of civilization. For adults and school-age children and up. (60-minute performance)

AUDIENCE RESPONSE

"Milbre's cosmic storytelling was amazing. After she finished the stories, admiring parents and children crowded around her."

– Tom Linden

"Good night to be inside with great stories told by a great storyteller!"

– Nancie McDermott

General tech needs for socially-distanced live performances:

- A general wash of light
- A remote lapel microphone, if amplification is needed.
- A 75-minute set-up time in the performance area before the audience enters, to adapt the show to the space.
- A half-hour tear-down is needed.
- Any additional tech needs for specific live shows will be provided to the sponsor in advance.



KUDOS FOR MILBRE

“Classic Wit”

– Wilma Dykeman, New York Times

“Mesmerizing...like a fine solo dancer”

– San Diego Union-Tribune

“You grew up to be what you always were: a storyteller.”

– Debbie Sherman (Milbre’s best friend from grammar school)

“Milbre Burch is one of the most important voices in the festival-based American storytelling revival.”

– Susan Klein, Founder of the Martha’s Vineyard Storytelling Festival

“If I were a story, I would want to be told by Milbre Burch.”

– Storyteller Beth Horner

PRESS RELEASES FOR MILBRE BURCH SHOWS

GRAMMY-NOMINATED STORYTELLER, MILBRE BURCH to present Tales from Beyond the Ban: Folktales from Iran, Iraq, Libya, Somalia, Sudan, Syria and Yemen

GRAMMY-NOMINATED STORYTELLER, MILBRE BURCH to present CHANGING SKINS: Folktales about Gender, Identity and Humanity

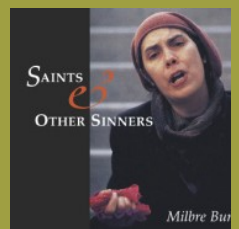
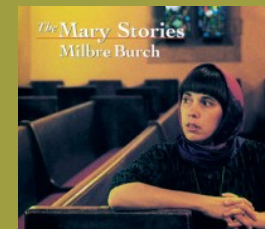
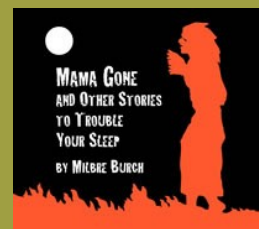
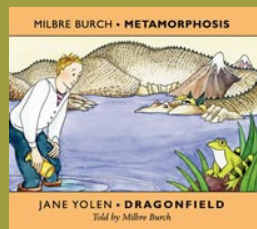
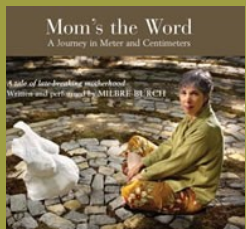
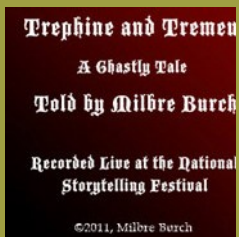
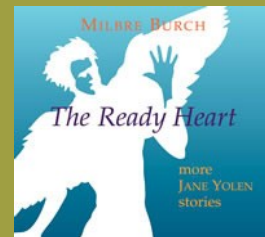
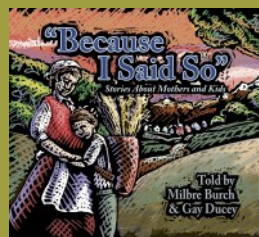
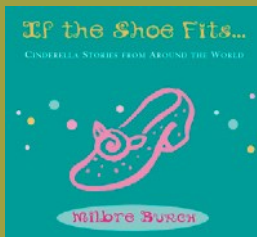
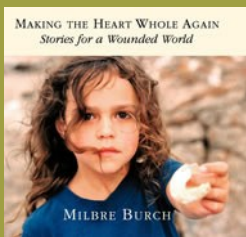
GRAMMY-NOMINATED STORYTELLER, MILBRE BURCH to perform Susan Glaspell’s 1917 short story “A Jury of her Peers” And Burch’s original monodrama, *Sometimes I Sing*

GRAMMY-NOMINATED STORYTELLER, MILBRE BURCH to perform *The Moon and Beyond: Night Sky Stories from Around the World*

INTERVIEWS & REVIEWS: <https://www.kindcrone.com/interviews-and-reviews>

VIDEO & AUDIO: <https://www.kindcrone.com/video-audio>

Milbre's storytelling albums are available from [Kind Crone Productions](#).





SELECTED HONORS

2020 Orange County Arts Commission, Artist Project Grant to video original monologue, *Sometimes I Sing*, and provide screenings of it to three Orange County agencies serving domestic abuse survivors for use in staff trainings and/or for fundraising purposes, Chapel Hill, NC.

2019-2020 Durham Arts Council, CAPS Program Rostered Artist, Durham, NC.

2018-2020 Medical School, Public Speaking Consultant, University of MO.

2015 Starting Gate New Play Festival, Playwriting Commission, Columbia, MO.

2015 State University of New York, Playwriting Commission, Plattsburgh, NY.

2013 Kennedy Center American College Theatre Festival, Finalist, National Ten-Minute Play Festival, Washington, DC.

2011 Catalyst Award for premiering *Changing Skins: Tales about Gender, Identity and Humanity*, given by the LGBTQ Resource Center, University of Missouri, Columbia, MO.

2009 Huebner Award to create *Changing Skins: Tales about Gender, Identity and Humanity*, given by the National Storytelling Network, Kansas City, MO.

2008 Grammy Nomination for Best Children's Spoken Word Album, LA, CA.

