

UC SANTA BARBARA

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UCSB TAKES PART IN FIRST NIGHT GALA

Music, dance and science highlight New Year's Eve performances

Santa Barbara will inaugurate its premier New Year's Eve community celebration with the help of UCSB students, faculty and staff.

Beginning at noon Friday, First Night Santa Barbara 2000 will transform the city into a public celebration of art, music and festivity. The gala's many scheduled events includes performances by the popular UCSB Physics Circus, the internationally renowned UCSB Middle East Ensemble and Anne Rothfarb, whose fists and feet ring the university's 61-bell carillon housed in Storke Tower.

From noon to 5 p.m. in De La Guerra Plaza, the Physics Circus will entertain Santa Barbara children and their families with hands-on science demonstrations as part of the Young + Young at Heart Interactive Art Festival.

Spectators will move from exhibit to exhibit and learn different basic scientific concepts through direct experience, demonstrations, and explanations from physics graduate students and faculty, said Jean Carlson, professor of physics and Physics Circus faculty sponsor. The department's community outreach program, the circus brings a one-hour science-filled show to elementary and junior high schools, and individual class sessions to high schools during the academic year. For Friday, the circus has lined up exciting demonstrations of mechanics, angular momentum, low

temperatures, sound, electricity and magnetism.

Performers include UCSB graduate students, Heather Walling, Julie Correa, Robbie Sedgewick, Andrew Frey, Rebecca Danos, Jennifer West and Chris Santangelo; Jessica Gurgack, a friend of Physics Circus; UCSB physics faculty members, Helen Hansma and Deborah Fygenson; and Westmont faculty member Jill Vanderhoof.

At 8 p.m., the UCSB Middle East Ensemble will take the stage for an hour at the Santa Barbara County Courthouse Sunken Garden. Thirty-five members of the ensemble (which includes a 27-member orchestra and chorus, and seven dancers) will perform music and dance from Turkey, Iran, Syria/Lebanon and Egypt.

The ensemble performs music and dance from throughout the Middle East, including selections from Arab, Turkish, Persian, Armenian, Greek, Sephardic and Oriental Jewish, and Assyrian cultures. The repertoire ranges from classical pieces to religious songs, folk and popular songs, folk dances, and cabaret-style dances.

Begun in 1989 by UCSB ethnomusicology professor Scott Marcus, the ensemble has performed throughout California, including concerts in San Diego, Los Angeles, Pomona, Pasadena, Santa Barbara, San Luis Obispo, Berkeley and Sacramento. This fall, seven members of the ensemble performed in the Central Asian country of Uzbekistan as the sole U.S. representatives at the International "Melodies of the East" festival in the city of Samarkand.

Marcus leads the ensemble as a whole. Dwight Reynolds, professor of Arabic language and literature and chair of the university's Islamic and Near Eastern Studies program, directs the group's chorus; Sue Rudnicki leads the percussion section and award-winning dancer and choreographer, Alexandra King, leads the dance troupe.

The evening will end with a spectacular fireworks show and Anne Rothfarb in the 175-foot Storke Tower. Rothfarb, assistant to the UCSB economics department chair and academic personnel specialist, will play the carillon, a keyboard and pedal board instrument with a set of tuned bells (the largest bell is approximately 2.5 tons), as church bells throughout the community herald the new millennium.

"I will begin my program at the stroke of midnight and will continue until 12:15 a.m.," she said. "This is when all of the other bells in Santa Barbara will stop ringing."

First used in the 16th century, carillons signal the time and important events

in present-day northern France, Belgium and Holland. At UCSB, Rothfarb plays the bells every Wednesday from 5 p.m. to 5:15 p.m. Several carillon concerts and tours are in the works for the summer.

"People in the community need to know that we have a wonderful, unusual instrument on this campus," she added. "They have reacted very enthusiastically to seeing and hearing the carillon in the past, and many times just need to be told when it will be played so that they can make plans to come to the campus to listen."

First Night began in Boston in 1976 to broaden and deepen the public's appreciation of the visual and performing arts through an innovative, diverse and high-quality New Year's Eve program. The community enjoys a cultural experience that is accessible, affordable to all,

safe and alcohol-free so that people of all ages may participate.

About UC Santa Barbara

The University of California, Santa Barbara is a leading research institution that also provides a comprehensive liberal arts learning experience. Our academic community of faculty, students, and staff is characterized by a culture of interdisciplinary collaboration that is responsive to the needs of our multicultural and global society. All of this takes place within a living and learning environment like no other, as we draw inspiration from the beauty and resources of our extraordinary location at the edge of the Pacific Ocean.