UC SANTA BARBARA
THE Current

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Shelly Leachman

Cue the Lights

After hosting an entirely virtual season as theaters and other venues remained dark to the public, UCSB Arts & Lectures has flipped the switches for the new year. Creating Hope, the cultural arts organization's 2021-2022 programming initiative, this fall brings a return to live, in-person events — just as students, faculty and staff also return.

"Dance is back. Live music is back. Timely and topical public lectures are back. Arts & Lectures is back!" said A&L's Miller McCune Executive Director Celesta M. Billeci. "We're thrilled to return to in-person events, live on stage. We gather together to experience live events; it's what we do. But these are complicated times, and we understand that some people may be unable to return to indoor events yet. So, we're offering an in-home viewing option for most events — allowing anybody with a ticket to an event the opportunity to enjoy it along with the rest of us, but from their home screen."

The season officially opens October 10 and will run through May 2022. A robust slate of performances and lectures will feature both well-known names and A&L regulars — including Joshua Bell, Pico Iyer, Bela Fleck and The Joffrey Ballet — as well as select new faces, such as writer Roxane Gay, Arturo O'Farrill and the Afro Latin Jazz Orchestra, and alt-rock/roots powerhouse Amythyst Kiah. Additional films, talks and performances will be announced throughout the season.

But first, as a welcome-back bonus to the entire UC Santa Barbara campus community — reunited after 18 months away — A&L also is presenting two free, live,

lunchtime concerts outside in Storke Plaza to kick off fall quarter. Grammy-winning group La Santa Cecilia performs Thursday, Sept. 23; Chicano roots band Las Cafeteras plays Wednesday, Sept. 29. Both shows start at 12 p.m. and are open to all. (Masks are recommended at outdoor gatherings.)

“Creating Hope programs strengthen human connection, promote emotional well-being, joy and compassion, and envision positive change,” Billeci said. “When we first launched this programming initiative in spring 2021, we stepped forward with programs to bring hope to our campus and community. And we remain deeply committed to this endeavor, as you’ll see reflected in the events throughout the season.

“This is a time that calls for optimism, resilience, courage and vision. Santa Barbara needs hope, and Arts & Lectures is uniquely positioned to respond,” she continued. “Creating Hope has already inspired our community with presentations by His Holiness the Dalai Lama, cellist Yo-Yo Ma, chef Jose Andres and author Anne Lamott. We will continue to inspire, through shared experiences with thought leaders, creative problem solvers and arts visionaries who will guide us forward.”

And it will all be done with public safety top of mind. Protocols for attending in-person events are being developed in conjunction with evolving state, local and university health guidelines, and will be updated as necessary over the course of the season.

Currently, proof of full vaccination is required for entry to all A&L events, as is an official photo ID; masks must be worn indoors at all times. Flexible ticket returns and exchanges will be offered throughout the season, and many events will have live-streaming alternatives — available with regular ticket purchase — for those unable to come in person.

“We’re conscious that things are rapidly changing,” Billeci noted, “and our wish is to accommodate as much of our community as possible.”

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.