

SANTA BARBARA SEASONS

GUIDES TO THE CULTURAL ARTS, LANDMARKS, RESTAURANTS AND WINERIES

SPRING 2010

Santa Barbara SEASONS

CELEBRATING LOCAL LIFE & CULTURE

SPRING INSPIRATION FOR HOME & GARDEN



FRESH PASTA HOW-TO FARMERS' MARKET COCKTAILS CULTIVATING CALM—SANTA BARBARA STYLE

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igniting a Love of Art

"The arts support learning in academic subject areas by helping children develop higher-level thinking skills like imagination, problem solving and collaboration."

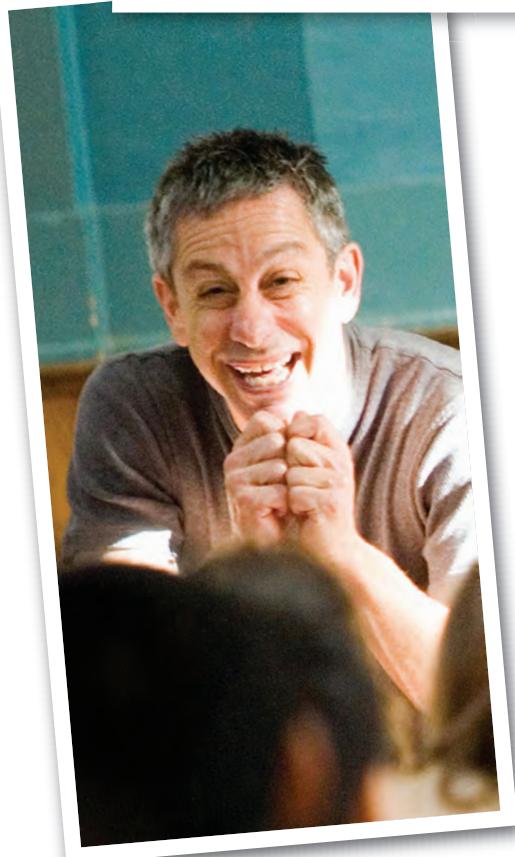
—Kathy Koury

BY LESLIE DINABERG

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VISITORS COME FROM far and wide to feast their eyes on the beautiful chalk creations that come to life at I Madonnari, the Italian street painting festival held each Memorial Day weekend at Santa Barbara Mission. But not all are aware that this signature event is the primary fundraiser for Children's Creative Project (CCP), Santa Barbara County Education Office's nonprofit arts education program.

From its humble beginnings in 1972 as a volunteer-led after-school art program at Franklin Elementary, each school year CCP now provides more than 60,000 students in 110 schools in Santa Barbara and San Luis Obispo counties with performances by touring artists and another 30,000 students with resident artist workshops and hands-on instruction.



PHOTOS THIS PAGE TOP AND BOTTOM: LAWRENCE WELLIN. LARRY MILLS. OPPOSITE PAGE TOP RIGHT: ISSAC HERNANDEZ. BOTTOM: DAVID BAZEMORE (2)



Shown here, some of the many opportunities for art immersion provided by CCP. Opposite page top-bottom: BOXTALES' Jumbo Watoto; face painting with resident artists; storytelling by Michael Katz. This page above: BOXTALES' production of OM: An Indian Tale of Good and Evil. Below left and right: Yamato Wadaiko Drummers of Japan, appearing in a special daytime performance at Santa Barbara Bowl for thousands of grade school students.



"What's really important to me is that these world-class performers are made available to the kids and that they get to have a real theater experience."

— Dian Pulverman



It's a unique partnership that brings young people together with professional artists, who band together with educators through public support, grants and fundraising from a variety of sources to offer students an array of art experiences.

"We want people to appreciate that it's important for children to experience the joy and inspiration that you can find working in the arts or seeing professional artists perform," says Kathy Koury, a former dancer who was one of the original volunteers teaching at Franklin in the 1970s and has stayed involved with CCP since its formal inception as a nonprofit in 1974, taking over as executive director in 1977.

Koury is modest about her accomplishments, crediting much of the program's success to the support of William J. Cirone, Superintendent, Santa Barbara County Education Office. She will, however, admit with some pride that since 1981, in collaboration with UCSB Arts & Lectures and Santa Barbara Bowl Foundation Education Outreach, CCP has produced major performance events for local children every school year. For example, last fall approximately 5,500 children saw the Yamato Wadaiko Drummers of Japan perform at Santa Barbara Bowl, and during the 2008/09 school year, Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater performed at Arlington Theatre for thousands of assembled school children. This is often the students' first exposure to a live professional performance in a quality venue.

"It was my dream to bring Wynton Marsalis and Lincoln Center Jazz Orchestra to Santa Barbara," says Koury, who did so

in 2002. "(He is) so great in the way he communicates with children about music. He can break it down into some of its basic elements and has such an interesting way of doing that by bringing in music history and using his orchestra to illustrate the points he is trying to make."

Other notable performances include Valerie Huston Dance Theater, Soweto Street Beat, Bella Lewitzky Dance Company, Korean Classical Music and Dance Company, Claddagh Dance Company, Mariachi Festival and Jane Goodall.

"What's really important to me is that these world-class performers are made available to the kids and that they get to have a real theater experience," says Board Vice President Dian Pulverman, who works year-round to plan I Madonnari, along with Board President Phil Morreale; staff members Koury, Diane Elsner, Lisa Soldo and Marilyn Zellet; and board members Karyn Yule, Micheline Hughes, Tracy Beard, Beverly Clay, Jan Clevinger, Cynthia DiMatteo, Maura Harding, Bryan Kerner, Kristen Nostrand, Christi Vior and Robin Yardi.

Prior to joining the board in 2004, Pulverman was part of CCP's Cultural Arts Network, where representatives from local schools (primarily parent volunteers) meet to coordinate performances, plan assemblies and decide on traveling artists. CCP does much of the advance legwork, screening hundreds of different touring groups, pre-negotiating fees and providing an arts catalog of 180 different touring groups that offer educational and cultural performances and often provide study guides to tie their

Above: For many students, the performances they attend through CCP are the first live professional performances they have ever seen. **Opposite:** I Madonnari, the beloved annual chalk-painting festival at Santa Barbara Mission, is CCP's main fundraiser. Businesses, schools and individuals sponsor squares to be decorated. A section of the ground is dedicated to young artists like the one seen here.

PHOTO THIS PAGE: DAVID BAZEMORE. OPPOSITE PAGE: NELL CAMPBELL



performances into the curriculum. Schools then work together to "block book" discounted performances, which are further discounted by an "arts credit" that each public school receives annually from CCP.

CCP also produces a touring artist showcase onstage at Crane School, where artists are invited to perform short demonstrations. "The showcase was a fabulous way for us to be introduced to the schools in the Santa Barbara area," says Phil Gold, a member of The Perfect Gentlemen, a vocal quartet. "The theater was just the right size, allowing the artists to make eye contact with people in the audience."

Not only do local children benefit, but artists ranging from BOXTALES, State Street Ballet, Abalaye African Dance Ensemble, Konrad Kono and Dancing Drum to Santa Barbara Symphony, VocalPoint, PCPA and Branden Aroyan also gain from their connection to CCP. "Part of our mission is to provide work for artists," says Koury. "The way we look at it is we try to hire professional artists so they have their own career as professional artists but then part-time they can teach and interact with children."

With financial support from CCP, these artists work in residence teaching in classrooms (this part of the program is coordinated by Shelley Triggs), perform at assemblies and, in the case of storyteller Michael Katz, do both. Katz has been affiliated with CCP for decades, beginning with teaching juggling at Open Alternative School. He now works with about 20 local elementary schools each year. **CONTINUED ON PAGE 60**

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"It's really quite remarkable," he says. "Every kid in the school basically knows who I am, which is a really beautiful aspect—that kids become so familiar, they grow up believing that a storyteller is part of a school. That will be something that, as adults, they will value—a person who tells a good story is valuable and the lessons in stories are valuable."

As an artist in residence, he works in classrooms for about four days at a time. "Each kid will get up in front of the class at least once—for some classrooms, what they really need to learn about is listening, and in another classroom, it's about vocal projection, and in another classroom, it may be shyness about physical movement," he says.

Anything to do with art is "a very positive time in a child's school day. It

Storyteller and artist in residence Michael Katz has been affiliated with CCP for decades, working with roughly 20 local elementary schools every year. As an artist in residence, he works with students for several days at a time.

encourages them to come to school, to stay in school, and it's non-judgmental. It's an area where they can excel when they might not excel in some academic area," explains Koury. "Plus the arts support learning in academic subject areas and help children develop higher-level thinking skills like imagination, problem solving, sequencing patterns, reflection and revision, and collaboration. These are incredibly important life skills, and they are so easily learned and experienced—children learn these by doing the arts." *

Leslie Dinaberg is a Santa Barbara-based writer whose work has appeared widely in regional publications. She is features editor of Santa Barbara Seasons magazine.

PHOTOS: LARRY MILLS

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