More bold moves and big ideas from UCSB Arts & Lectures

A STUNNING BREATH OF INTERNATIONAL TALENT AND ERUDITE INSIGHT WILL INJECT SANTA BARBARA’S CULTURAL MISE-EN-SCÈNE, UCSB Arts and Lectures announced, sharing their 2017-18 season at the Coral Casino on Tuesday. The community making and shaping program led by Celeste Billeci, MillerMcCune Executive Director, launches at the end of September with a performance by Mexican-American balladeer Lila Downs. From opening week with Lila Downs, who had to have special permission from the Met for this performance), Lang Lang, Bill Murray, to month after month of fantastic performances and enlightening talks, Arts & Lectures is once again the place to be,” enthused Billeci to the crowd of patrons, press, and people of influence from the community and the university gathered for the exciting moment. The opening days of the season will reverberate with talent, including Downs (Sept. 27th), Pianist Lang Lang (October 1st), Hubbard Street Dance Chicago (October 3rd), Cory Henry & The Funk Apostles (October 4th), Samantha Bee (October 5th), Bill Murray, Jan Vogler & Friends (October 6th), Ira Glass (October 7th), and, and, and...

Highlights also include today’s most sought-after opera diva Joyce DiDonato; The Daily Show host Trevor Noah; late-night satirical news show host Samantha Bee; Israel Philharmonic Orchestra with renowned conductor Zubin Mehta; and former Vice President Joe Biden. Organized in series, the season is rich, edgy, challenging... In all there will be more than 60 engaging events with 14 Santa Barbara debuts, two new series, and two co-commissioned performances.

Those sampling the season will find fascinating talks by today’s thought leaders, command performances by some of the world's premier dance companies, musicians and performers – at venues from UCSB to downtown Santa Barbara and beyond, with additional events, including performances, films, and public lectures, being announced throughout the season.

Series subscriptions are on sale now.

“A&Ls 2017-2018 season of performances and public lectures unveils surprises and explores new ideas,” Billeci added. “This season, you’ll find old friends and new faces. We are always eager to see favorites like Cirque Eloize, Pink Martini, and Audra McDonald – but we also look forward to meeting pop culture dynamos Trevor Noah and Samantha Bee, along with former Vice President Joe Biden and other leading thinkers and change-makers. And, we are so thrilled to be able to present former U.S. Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice, whose lecture was confirmed just after the brochure went to print.”

The two new series presented this year may indicate the community's hunger for even more thought provoking engagement.

“New this year is the Speaking with Pico series, conversations between our beloved Pico Iyer and four innovative thinkers who represent some of the best creative minds of today,” Billeci explained. “We are also proud to include a new Theater series featuring the brilliant and surprising Belgian production Kiss & Cry.”

Other phenomenal artists... the Israel Philharmonic Orchestra with Zubin Mehta, superstar mezzo-soprano Joyce DiDonato, and Spainís Compañía Nacional de Danza in an irresistible Carmen.

Arts & Lectures is a community-based program, and we couldn’t do it without our patrons, our Friends, UCSB students, and University administration, our media partners, and a cadre of educational outreach and SAGE Publications, our Corporate Season Sponsor. We are so grateful for their continued support. Without their support and that of countless others, we wouldn’t be able to do this,” Billeci added.

Returning series include:

• The DANCE series (one of Billeci’s favorites) features inventive, passionate, spellbinding productions that redefine dance landscapes.

• Revered cultural ambassadors of the MARCO series will deliver enchanting evenings and repertoire to be savored. The series opens with international piano phenomenon Lang Lang, performing his exquisite rendition of Bach’s Goldberg Variations (Sun., Oct. 1 / 7pm / Granada Theatre).

• In the CHAMBER ARTS series, master artists take their music in surprising new directions. The series features The Knights with Avital Avital & Kian Azemh, a collaboration between the trailblazing Israeli mandolin virtuoso Avital, soulful Syrian cornettist/composer Azemh and Brooklyn-based classical chamber ensemble The Knights. A&L co-commissioned a triple concerto for clarinet, mandolin and violin, included in this extraordinary program that crosses into the worlds of Middle Eastern, Balkan, klezmer and jazz music (Thurs., Nov. 9 / 7pm / Campbell Hall).

• Celebrate the world’s vibrant cultural traditions with masters of music and movement in the GLOBAL Sounds series. The Global Sounds series opens with the dynamic power and range of Lila Downs, showcasing her unique synthesis of indigenous Mesoamerican music with cumbia, soul, hip hop and hip hop (Wed., Sept. 27 / 8pm / Granada Theatre).

• Music’s rising superstars shine bright in an elegant, intimate setting of acoustic excellence in the UP CLOSE & MUSICAL series.

• The ROOTS series digs into the legacy of America’s homegrown music, from old-time to gospel. Banjo royalty Béla Fleck and Abigail Washburn are back by popular demand with their combination of jazz-to-classical ingenuity and earthy musical exuberance (Tues., Oct. 10 / 8pm / Campbell Hall).

• In the WORD OF MOUTH series, leading thinkers investigate who we are, why we are and who we want to be. A proud product of the Rust Belt, author of the gripping memoir HBilly Eby: A Culture in Crisis J.D. Vance offers a rare insider’s perspective of how social policies and culture affect some of the poorest communities in the U.S. (Mon., Oct. 23 / 7:30pm / Granada Theatre).

• The TALKING HEADS series features headline-making hilarity from today’s wise and witty storytellers. Samantha Bee, host of Full Frontal and former correspondent on The Daily Show with Jon Stewart, will make her Santa Barbara debut in a moderated conversation full of her whip-smart charm (Thurs., Oct. 5 / 8pm / Arlington Theatre).

• The hot horns, blue notes and improvisational wizardry of America’s original art form are center stage in the Jazz series. Straight from the 2017 Playboy Jazz Festival, Cory Henry & The Funk Apostles make their Santa Barbara debut, featuring Hammond B-3 organ dynamo Henry (of Snarky Puppy) along with four all-star musicians hand-picked to match his wide-ranging musical inspirations and verve (Wed., Oct. 4 / 8pm / Campbell Hall).

Be a kid again, with exciting events for the whole family in the FAMILY FUN series. LA’s hip-hop-reggae-rock sensation Ozomatli presents Ozokidz, a crazy catchy dance party that captures the innovation and liveliness that Ozomatli fans love, with original tunes that educate kids on everything from respecting nature skateboarding (Sun., Oct. 8 / 3pm / Campbell Hall).

The two new series:

• A writer, a physician, a 30 something blogger and a bestselling novelist – inspiration today comes from surprising directions. Join Pico Iyer and discover fresh and hopeful ways to think about tomorrow in the brand new SPEAKING WITH PICO series. Award-winning novelist and essayist Zach Smith emerged as one of the most important voices of her generation through her unique perspective on contemporary culture with superb dialogue and emotionally rich stories (Wed., Oct. 11 / 7:30pm / Campbell Hall).

• All the world’s a stage in the mesmerizing tales of wit, whimsy and wonder on the THEATER series. French-Canadian cirque troupe Extraordinaire Cirque Boize will swing into a Wild West-inspired adventure that rustles up fun for the whole family, with phenomenal physical feats – acrobatics, aerial and juggling – set to live music and old favorites from Johnny Cash and Patsy Cline (Wed., Feb. 7 / 7pm / Granada Theatre).

For discounts of up to 25 percent, great seats, early notice about newly added events, and free ticket exchanges, patrons can subscribe to any of Arts & Lectures’ 12 fixed series packages: Dance, Marquee, Chamber Arts, Global Sounds, Up CLOSE & Musical, Roots, World of Mouth, Talking Heads, Jazz, Theater, Speaking with Pico, and Family Fun. Another option is the popular Create Your Own series: Purchase tickets to six or more events and save 10 percent off single ticket prices.

Series subscriptions can be purchased by phone at (805) 993-3353, online or in person at the Arts & Lectures Ticket Office in Building 422 (parking lot 12 off Mesa Road) on the UCSB campus, for a season brochure, an order form, or more info, call or visit www.ArtsAndLectures.UCSB.edu. Single tickets go on sale Sat., Aug. 5th at 10am.