

For Immediate Release

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## **Great Line-Up of Entertainment at First Night Monterey 2018 on Sunday, December 31, 2017**

December, 2017. Monterey, CA. First Night Monterey 2018 is bringing an incredible array of entertainment this year, both artists and musicians new to the event and many returning favorites by popular demand! "Celebrating 25 Years of Magic" is the theme for First Night Monterey 2018. There will be magic in the streets, jugglers, stilt-walkers and brilliant visual installations.

First Night Monterey was named the top reason to visit Monterey by the San Francisco Chronicle just a few years ago. It was described as "The state's most dynamic and alcohol-free family-friendly New Year's Eve festival." The many performances range from Classical to Hip-Hop, Jazz to Reggae, dance and artwork.

### **NEW ENTERTAINMENT FOR FIRST NIGHT MONTEREY 2018**

New to First Night Monterey this year, **DIRTY CELLO** is cello like you've never heard before!

From China to Italy, and all over the U.S., Dirty Cello, led by vivacious cross-over cellist, Rebecca Roudman, brings the world a high energy and unique spin on blues and bluegrass. Good Times Santa Cruz says "...what is most spectacular about them is hearing the depth of soul in Roudman's playing — it goes beyond what most people would expect from the instrument. She plays it with so much heart, you'll wonder why more bands don't have a cellist." From down home blues with a wailing cello to virtuosic stompin' bluegrass, Dirty Cello is a band that gets your heart thumping and your toes tapping!

Also new to First Night Monterey, **THE PROUDEST MONKEYS** is a musical collective operating out of Monterey.

In 2016, band leader Trevor Lucier released the album, "Destruction of the Species" to a welcoming and supportive local music scene. Following a successful first show, declared one of the area's best shows of the year by The Monterey County Weekly, the rest of the group came together around a mutual conviction that music is a potent resource in the movement to bring humanity closer together. With this ideal in mind, The Proudest Monkeys have set out to perform all over the Central California Area in an effort to bring together the many local scenes that exist in the region.

First Night Monterey 2018 newcomer **AMY WARREN** is an American Roots journey, embodying the down home spirit of acoustic traditions, from blues to bluegrass and folk to rock.

Amy Warren is a story teller at heart, and her original music touches the soul and stirs the senses, with "deep folk" influences spanning Celtic to bluegrass to gypsy jazz. She brings a rich musical mix that is warm and familiar. Her heartfelt storytelling and expressive flat-picking pair with Harry Thomas' powerful harmonica and Derek Bodkin's imaginative banjo make for a fresh take on American classics. With a growing catalog of original music and covers ranging from the Carter Family to Johnny Cash and Gillian Welch to Jack White, this band is a must-see for roots music fans.

## **Returning Musical Artists**

Perennial First Night Monterey 2018 favorite **BLACK IRISH BAND** opens the night at the Golden State Theater with their highly entertaining and very up-beat and progressive Folk, Americana, and Celtic Pub-Rock music.

Hailing from the historic Gold Rush Country of America, the Black Irish Band of 28 years have a musical style that is as timeless as the rugged landscape of the west, a tribute to the people whose lives were spent building the world we now take for granted. The band has a large complement of traditional maritime and railroad music, as well as ethnic tunes in their repertoire. They excel at Irish & Scottish, and American folk music with an assortment of original songs and traditional western ballads. The bands musical style captures the spirit of the immigrants of this land, the men and women who tamed the Wild West.

Enjoy a joyful evening of song! **I CANTORI DI CARMEL** opens the night in the beautiful sanctuary of Carleton Hall.

I Cantori has been performing great choral masterpieces for Monterey Peninsula audiences for over 35 years, frequently touring internationally. Our repertoire for First Night will span the ages: sacred motets to contemporary compositions and songs from around the world. The group is united by a desire to cherish and preserve the heritage of great choral music.

**THE LEGENDARY CHICANO ALL-STARS** are perennial favorites at various clubs and festivals all over the Central Coast.

The Chicano All Stars are all professional musicians with many years of experience in the music business. Known as one of the area's top Latin Rock bands, The Chicano All-Stars are a talented, dynamic and energetic band. Just recently, Chicano All Stars have added a solid and highly polished horn section. Their upbeat, danceable repertoire is rooted in a great mix of Latin rock, Old School, R & B, classic Rock 'n' Roll, and danceable Reggae. Their Latin rhythms, strong percussive backbeat and excellent vocals appeal to a wide variety of audiences, young and old alike, and are guaranteed to keep your feet on the dance floor.

For over 20 years, **HEARTSTRINGS** has brought their fresh and unique sound to traditional acoustic string music from all over the world.

Begin your New Year celebration toe-tappin' to local acoustic string band Heartstrings, again bringing their versatile smorgasbord style of string music to First Night Monterey. The band plays all kinds of string music from around the world including Celtic, Eastern European, and good ol' toe-tappin' Appalachian string music. Band members are Laura Burian (fiddle), FNM founder Paulette Lynch (hammered dulcimer), Marj Ingram Viales (guitar), Rick Chelew (double bass), and Mike Osgood (mandolin). From beautiful traditional and contemporary waltzes to driving jigs and reels, a high energy performance with top players.

**DEREK BODKIN'S HOVERING BREADCAT FOLK ENSEMBLE** is a spirited group of musicians performing funky folk grooves, bluegrass, swing, gospel and meaningful originals.

Derek is a Monterey Bay singer-songwriter and multi-instrumentalist who has performed a variety of music with some of the hottest national groups. (Five Eyed Hand, New Monsoon, Billy Nershi, Trailer Park Troubadours, Joe Craven, New Monsoon, Hot Buttered Rum). Derek brings a special 'mojo' to the stage to make the listener feel right at home. On his first solo album, "True Story", Derek shared his love

for musical tradition, collaboration, and storytelling as well as a penchant for memorable melody writing, putting his own unique twists to the traditional American songwriting genre. Joining Derek will be his friends known as "The Hovering Breadcat Folk Ensemble." (featuring Brian Vandemark on bass, Colin St. John on keyboards, Tommy Knowles on guitar and vocals, Harry Thomas on Harmonica and Monica Payne on percussion).

First Night favorite **SAMBA LEGAL** (pronounced 'leh-gao', meaning "cool, hip") plays rhythms from Bahia and Rio de Janeiro: Samba Reggae, Samba Afro, Samba, and more!

Boom! Get ready for Brazilian drums and dancers who spring to life this New Year's Eve! "Energetic, upbeat, and a real crowd pleaser" best describes this local Brazilian percussion group. Playing locally for the last 7 years, Samba Legal offers an arrangement of authentic Brazilian carnival beats and syncopated rhythms from all regions of Brazil. It's tough not to partake in the dynamic dance and song, even with a little foot stomping or clapping along the way. Generating excitement wherever they play, this spirited and colorful group of drummers and dancers is known for getting crowds out of their chairs and onto the dance floor. A First Night favorite and a must see!

Hear the thunder of the drums! **SHINSHO MUGEN DAIKO** opens First Night Monterey with traditional Japanese drumming.

Experience the exquisite physicality of these Taiko Drummers as they perform traditional Japanese drumming, incorporating elements of martial arts. Shinsho Mugen Daiko was founded in 1999 by Ikuyo Conant, as a group of drummers interested in studying the art of Japanese drumming. Taiko is a traditional form of Japanese drumming that incorporates those elements of martial art which focuses on centering oneself in the grounded position, and the concentration, direction and controlling of energy and breathing.

Lyrical refreshing and musically diverse, **DAN FRECHETTE & LAUREL THOMSEN** take to the stage with exuberance!

Meeting via a chance YouTube sighting, eclectic Roots-Folk songwriters Dan Frechette, guitar/harmonica/vocals, and Laurel Thomsen, violin/vocals, prove that musical magic is not only possible, but "a match made in heaven". With broad influences ranging from Folk, Classical, Old Time and Celtic, to Gospel, Jazz, Vintage Country, Rock N' Roll, Blues, and Bluegrass, Dan and Laurel flow seamlessly through genres, tempos, stories, and moods, embodying each style with virtuosic command and keeping music fans on the edge of their seats. Enjoyment is palpable.

**THE FIRESIDE COLLECTIVE** will be here to 'ease you out of the reality you know and into the reality you crave.'

Pulling inspiration from the cool jazz of Miles Davis to the modern R&B of Robert Glasper, this group strives not to fit the mold of jazz but rather to appreciate and indulge in the space that jazz creates for true musical exploration. While Jesse Burgess (drums) and James Collard (bass) hit you with the groove that will make your bootie move, Eryn Stratman (tenor sax/flute) will melt your cerebral cortex with licks so hot that 60% of your body will begin to boil, leaving Zak King (piano/keys) to douse the fire with a wave of cool harmony to let your spirit relax into its new state of existence. The Fireside Collective invites you to say goodbye to 2017 and begin the new year on a high note with us.

**GRUMBLING GINGER** brings the atmosphere of a British Folk Club to Monterey!

Original acoustic folk-rock with a Celtic twist. Grumbling Ginger (Jana Heller and Andrew Gilhooley) bring the atmosphere of a British folk club to Monterey with songs, storytelling, and a variety of acoustic instruments. They've played everywhere from coffee houses and pubs to house parties and festival stages in front of 10,000-plus people. The band has also made many radio and TV appearances. A long-time First Night favorite!

**THE COFFIS BROTHERS & THE MOUNTAIN MEN** are five young men from the Santa Cruz Mountains that have been playing around the Bay Area and beyond since 2010.

The Coffis Brothers & The Mountain Men play a style of music that is rock and roll in the most classic sense, melodic, rootsy and heartfelt. The band consists of Jamie Coffis (Vocals, Keyboard, ) Kellen Coffis (Vocals, guitar,) Kyle Poppen (Guitar,) Aidan Collins (Bass,) and Henry Chadwick (Drums.) The songwriting duo of Jamie and Kellen show an obvious love for a bygone era of music and for groups like Tom Petty and the Heartbreakers, Neil Young and The Beatles as well as a sense of maturity and experience beyond their years.

Playing styles range from traditional to contemporary, **SADZA MARIMBA** brings high-energy dance music from Zimbabwe.

Sadza brings audiences of all ages to their feet with joyful and memorable performances of Zimbabwean dance music. Sadza performs on six large handmade wooden marimbas, accompanied by congas, hosho (gourd shakers), mbira (thumb piano) and vocals in the Shona language. Much of our music has ancient roots in the spiritual traditions of the Shona people of Zimbabwe.

Photo of Sadza Marimba

Experience four-part harmony with the **MONTEREY BAY BELLES** women's a cappella barbershop-style chorus.

The Bay Belles Women's Barbershop Chorus sings favorite popular songs in the barbershop style. They are a non-profit organization engaged in member education, local school outreach and they perform several times throughout the year in Monterey County, hosting a cappella concerts featuring local and out of town talent. The Bay Belles love experiencing the thrill of singing four-part music and are excited to be performing at 'this great community event.'

LINDA ARCEO'S original songs are some of the best on the Monterey Peninsula.

Linda Arceo and special guest Casey Frazier are both accomplished singers, songwriters and talented musicians who often collaborate to bring a rich musical experience to audiences. Both have over a dozen albums in current distribution. Their exquisite combination of Americana and Vintage Rock-Inspired Indie Music keep listeners wanting more and always expand their following. Linda is currently in the studio recording her next album due out in early 2018. Linda's original music will pull at your heartstrings, get your toes tapping and leave you wanting more!

Celebrate our cultural diversity with **JAYSON FANN** featuring artists from around the globe!

This event will include drumming performances on one of the world's largest drums, musicians from across the globe, interactive singing and dance and spoken word. Don't miss this performance pulsing with powerful rhythms, acts of truth and imagination, celebrating the infinite creative spirit within us all. The event will feature an extraordinary group of artists, musicians, and dancers brought together by a

common vision to celebrate our culturally diverse community and to affirm our commitment to a future of solidarity with each other.

**GUITARS NOT GUNS** gives young people free guitars and lessons to encourage their creativity and help divert them from the negative influences of drugs, alcohol and gangs.

Guitars Not Guns is a non-profit program that provides instruments and instruction free of charge to foster kids, at risk youth and other children in a classroom setting with qualified teachers. Each student is assigned a beginner guitar when they come to the first class. They are allowed to take their guitars home with them and are asked to practice 30 minutes each day. The instructors volunteer their time. The Guitars Not Guns Band is made up of students, age 7-17, who meet at the Marina Teen Center. They will perform a selection of music ranging from children's classics to contemporary rock and blues.

### **WORLD DANCE**

**YAOCUAUHTLI CULTURAL DANCE** opens the First Night celebration with stunning costumes and traditional Aztec dances.

Yaocuahtli Cultural Dance is a calpulli (social unit) dedicated to the cultural enrichment of the community of Salinas thru Aztec dance, music, song and culture. Since its founding in 2003, Yaocuahtli is dedicated in strengthening the identity of the Mexican community by teaching indigenous traditions of their ancestors to future generations. They handcraft their regalia utilizing exotic skins, natural stones and beads, genuine leather and naturally molted exotic feathers for their headdresses.

Photo of Yaocuahtli Cultural Dance

Local Youth Company from **SPECTOR DANCE** will perform several short pieces to celebrate the season.

Since 1997, Spector Dance Company has presented multidisciplinary performances using a signature style that blends music, spoken word, and visual media with dance. Fran Spector Atkins, the lead artist and creative director, creates performance works that highlight themes relevant to the community. The Spector Dance Youth Company is a group of dedicated young dancers who bring their talent and love of dance to the community. The Spector Dance vision is to utilize dance as a vehicle to open doors, ignite creativity and fuel the human spirit.

Welcome the New Year with **MONTEREY BAY LION DANCE TEAM** symbolizing the arrival of prosperity and good luck.

Celebrate the New Year and lift your spirits with traditional Chinese lion dancing, a challenging art form complete with martial art postures and exciting rhythms of drums, cymbals and gongs. Elaborate costumes characterize the Lucky Lion and Happy Buddha. This dreamlike lion mimics human-like emotions and intelligence, symbolizing life and humanity. The lion dance is customarily performed during the Chinese Lunar New Year Celebrations, for the lion brings prosperity and good luck for the upcoming year. In conjunction with the lion dance team program, Monterey Bay Healing Tao Tai Chi members perform traditional Tai Chi martial hand & weapons forms for self-defense application as well as health and wellness.

Local dance troupe **DI FRANCO DANCEPROJECT** will partner with their **RAGAMUFFIN THEATER COMPANY**.

The DiFranco DanceProject, Dianne Lyle's company of dancers, ranging in age from 8 through 17 years, will offer a fun-filled, eclectic and exciting program of dances, inspired by cultures from around the globe. Ragamuffin Musical Theatre Company, the summer musical theatre youth camp lead by Dianne Lyle and Michael Blackburn, will perform numbers from their latest production, the famous movie musical, "Singin' In The Rain."

The dance team from **THE DANCE CENTER** in Carmel will present a program of dances.

Students ages 2 yrs. to adult are warmly welcomed into a creative atmosphere of passionate mentorship at The Dance Center - owned by Tia Brown and Laura Jeselnick. Classes include ballet, pointe, hip-hop, tap, jazz, contemporary, acrobatics, and musical theater. Thirteen competitive teams in different genres and 5 musical theater performance companies complement a curriculum that includes both recreational and pre-professional offerings taught by an exceptionally-talented faculty. TDC is proud to recognize and host the new affiliated nonprofit organization, Monterey Peninsula Ballet Theatre. MPBT promotes arts outreach and dance education with performance opportunities to the youth on the Monterey Peninsula.

Crowd favorite **PARK AVENUE BELLYDANCERS** will put smiles on your faces! Join in the fun!

Classic belly dance with an American flair! Stylized synchronized dances of both traditional and modern styles. Middle-Eastern Bellydance, which can be traced back to pre biblical times, has been used by both men and women for expression and healing, entertainment and exercise. This beautiful dance form consists of combinations of isolations of the body moved to the exact rhythms and melodies of the music, developed as specific expressions of life, each based on an aspect of our own humanity. They are always a crowd favorite - the audience is encouraged to join in the fun, so don't be shy!

### **About First Night Monterey 2018**

Don't miss the most enjoyable New Year's Eve ever when First Night Monterey 2018 will be "Celebrating 25 Years of Magic" in historic Downtown Monterey. The streets will come alive with a dazzling array of visual art displays, food booths and fantastic music and dance performances. Plan your night and "button up" for the New Year at this fun and exciting community celebration featuring many exciting NEW performers and activities this year!

First Night Monterey provides the perfect entertaining, affordable Kids Night Out with the entire family, including a fabulous procession that all will enjoy. This alcohol free festive event offers a wide array of music and dance, including popular children's performers that will be loved by all ages. There are also lots of interactive art activities for the kids which they can "make and take" with them.

First Night's Opening Ceremony begins on Colton Hall Lawn on Pacific Street at 3:00 p.m. with 2 hours of drumming, puppetry and interactive art activities. It kicks off with the exciting beat of many drums from traditional to the recycled! Join us as the drummers call us to begin our New Year's Eve Celebration!

The Twilight Procession, which begins at 5:30 p.m., is always a favorite family-friendly activity at First Night! It features many costumed performers, floats, drill and dance teams, bands, street musicians, stilt walkers and other participants.

This year, the route begins on Alvarado Street at Franklin and continues down Alvarado to Pearl. Our Grand Marshal, Mayor Clyde Robertson, will lead us as we kick off the evening programming to the New Year. If anyone would like to carry puppets in the twilight procession, visit the staging area on Franklin between Pacific Street and Alvarado to get involved. We invite the community to join us at the procession for a costume contest. We plan to light up your night!

### **At a Glance:**

What: "First Night Monterey: Celebrating 25 Years of Magic on New Year's Eve!"

Don't miss the most enjoyable New Year's Eve ever when First Night Monterey 2018 celebrates its 25th anniversary (1993-2018). "First Night Monterey: Celebrating 25 Years of Magic", will offer something amazing and magical for all ages, including great art activities and displays, new top musical entertainment and returning favorites, plus lots more fun things to do at this unique event on New Year's Eve in historic Downtown Monterey.

First Night Monterey 2018 celebrates the lively arts scene in Monterey County with its family-friendly celebration of the arts on New Years Eve. Enjoy all of the activities, colors, lights, musical entertainment and performances while attendees dance, play, act, perform, create and sing their way into 2018 with activities for both children and adults. Come in costume or dress however you like to enjoy an unforgettable evening.

Over 20 different indoor and outdoor venues will feature 70 regional and touring acts performing live music in a wide array of musical styles (pop, indie, blues, folk and rock 'n roll, including children's acts), a fabulous twilight procession, dance, comedy acts and magicians. (Schedule to be provided soon.)

First Night Monterey 2018 will transform the streetscapes, buildings, theaters, churches and concert halls throughout Historic Downtown Monterey into a fun, informative and unique way for the community to experience multiple forms of art on an evening where we can celebrate our uniqueness, our commonality and the coming of the New Year!

Come to First Night Monterey and create wonderful memories that include the entire family with the most affordable, accessible, alcohol free, safe and exciting New Year's celebration for all ages!

First Night Monterey will be held Rain or Shine. No worries as 85% of the activities are indoors.

Additional details including the First Night Program and Schedule will be added to the website, [www.firstnightmonterey.org](http://www.firstnightmonterey.org) so attendees can plan their night of fun!

When: Sunday, December 31, 2017 from 3:00 pm to Midnight

Where: Twenty venues in and around Historic Downtown Monterey including the Golden State Theatre and Colton Hall Lawn.

Cost: Purchase non-refundable First Night Monterey Buttons to have access to all of the magic of the event.

Park: Park at Del Monte Center and Ride the free bus to downtown Monterey! Perfect for families and singles. City of Monterey has several parking lots within a block or two from all the festivities.

Take advantage of discounted First Night 2018 Admission Buttons:

From December 6th - December 30th: Adults \$22 and Youth \$15

On December 31st: Adults \$25 and Youth \$18. Children five and under are free.

There are also special Family Packs available online only which includes 2 adult buttons and 2 youth for \$65 (not available in stores or online after December 28th).

First Night Monterey 2018 Buttons are available now on sale on the website at [firstnightmonterey.org](http://firstnightmonterey.org). Visit our local business to purchase: Safeway (all Monterey County stores), 7-Eleven stores (Monterey/Del Rey Oaks) and Rabobank (Monterey, Pacific Grove and Seaside). Buttons purchased online will be available for pick up at Will Call (location to be announced.)

Buying a button ensures that First Night Monterey 2018 offers the best in community arts and performing arts. Your button supports the First Night Monterey (a 501(c)3 non-profit) and directly supports the performers' fees.

Ride MST (Monterey Salinas Transit) busses free to First Night Monterey when you wear a First Night Monterey 2018 Button. Or use the free Park and Ride conveniently at Del Monte Center with continuous service to bring you to downtown! Park and Ride operates from 3:00 p.m. to 1:00 a.m.

Hotels and Restaurants:

There are many hotels to choose from in and around Monterey. First Night Monterey 2018 will have a varied selection of food and beverage booths for your enjoyment. The Monterey Peninsula has excellent restaurants in historic Downtown Monterey and nearby. For listings and reviews of hotels and restaurants, go to [www.monterey.com](http://www.monterey.com).

More Information: Phone (831) 373-4778; Email: [ellen@firstnightmonterey.org](mailto:ellen@firstnightmonterey.org)

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