



## PIPERS PIPING, LORDS A-LEAPING | Music, ballet, theater and more to light up the season

Holiday entertainment means something different to everyone. Some crave a classic *Nutcracker* ballet while others seek out a rousing chorale performance. Then there are those who want something unexpected to kick the yuletide up a notch. No matter what you're looking for, Ventura County has it.

Beginning with *The Nutcracker*, there are several area productions that are sure to delight the whole family. Accompanied by the Ventura College Symphony Orchestra, the Ventura County Ballet ([venturacountyballet.com](http://venturacountyballet.com)) takes the stage for its 20th annual production of the holiday staple (Oxnard Performing Arts Center, Dec. 1-2, and Ventura College Performing Arts Center, Dec. 8-9). The Ventura College Symphony Orchestra will also perform *The Nutcracker Suite* at the Ventura College Library Resource Center on Nov. 28 ([www.venturacollege.edu](http://www.venturacollege.edu)).

The Moorpark Civic Ballet ([www.moorparkballet.com](http://www.moorparkballet.com)) brings its *Nutcracker* to the Agoura Performing Arts Center on Dec. 23, while Footworks Youth Ballet ([www.oakleyballet.com](http://www.oakleyballet.com)) will be at the Oxnard Performing Arts and Convention Center Dec. 8-9, performing with the Footworks Community Orchestra and singers from the Carpe Diem Chorus.

Not to be outdone, the Thousand Oaks Civic Arts Plaza ([www.civicartsplaza.com](http://www.civicartsplaza.com)) will feature two different productions. As in every year, the Conejo Civic Ballet Company will feature all-new choreography to give "the audience a fresh look at a timeless classic" (Dec. 9). TOCAP's



Several productions of *The Nutcracker* will be offered throughout the county. Ventura County Ballet Company's takes place Dec. 1-9 in Oxnard and Ventura. *Photo courtesy of Ventura County Ballet Company*

resident ballet company Pacific Festival Ballet's opulent production features New York City Ballet principal dancers Tiler Peck and Gonzalo Garcia, and the Kalinin Russian Dance Troupe (Dec. 15-16).

Beyond *The Nutcracker*, TOCAP offers several other holiday shows and events. In *A Magical Cirque Christmas* on Nov. 24, master illusionists and circus artists perform dazzling routines to favorite holiday music. Next up is *A Gift of Magic*, presented by the 70-member Village Voices Chorale ([villagevoices.org](http://villagevoices.org)), who will perform well-loved carols, Hanukkah and Kwanzaa songs Nov. 30-Dec. 1. No holiday season would be complete without Charles Dickens' *A Christmas Carol*, and Scrooge et al return in the Thousand Oaks Repertory's version Dec. 6-9.

Continuing the feel of an old-world Christmas is *An Irish Christmas*, starring award-winning Irish dancers and members of the Kerry Dance Troupe, the Kerry Voice Squad and the Kerry Traditional Orchestra (Dec. 13-14). Then there is *Irish Christmas in America* at the Ojai Valley Woman's Club ([www.ojaiconcertseries.com](http://www.ojaiconcertseries.com)). The band Téada, vocalist Séamus Begley and



Ojai Valley Woman's Club hosts an *Irish Christmas in America* on Dec. 20. *Photo by Manuela Dei Grandi*

Sligo singer Niamh Farrell headline the concert that features Irish music, song and dance in "an engaging performance, rich in history, humor and boundless energy" (Dec. 20).

TOCAP rounds out its extensive holiday lineup in perfect harmony with *Brian Wilson Presents the Christmas Album Live!* on Dec. 20.

Musical royalty rules in Oxnard with *Broadway Princess Party: Holiday Edition*([broadwayprincessparty.com](http://broadwayprincessparty.com)). Broadway's original princesses — Tony-nominees Susan Egan (Belle) and Laura Osnes (Cinderella), and Grammy-nominee Courtney Reed (Jasmine) — are joined by special guest “prince” Adam J. Levy in the holiday version of the hit concert (Levity Live Comedy Club, Dec. 7).

There's a royal happening in Ojai, too, with *Cinderella*, a holiday pantomime at the Ojai Art Center Theater Nov. 30-Dec. 16 ([www.ojaiact.org](http://www.ojaiact.org)). This version of the classic tale is filled with music, laughs and outrageous fun.

If you're in the mood for a holiday concert, there are so many from which to choose. Spirit of the Season, presented by the Ojai Community Chorus ([ojaichorus.wordpress.com](http://ojaichorus.wordpress.com)), will include all kinds of holiday music, from the classical to the popular, and a kids ensemble will perform, too (Ojai United Methodist Church, Dec 1-2). Christmas Magic returns to the High Street Arts Center Dec. 7-16 ([highstreetartscenter.com](http://highstreetartscenter.com)) for its yearly celebration of holiday songs and stories, starring cast members from the theater's entire season.

Doc the Halls: Holiday Blues at NAMBA on Dec. 15 ([nambaarts.com](http://nambaarts.com)) finds Doc Ventura playing slide guitar, jazz and more in a “holiday blues blowout that's sure to make Santa shed a soulful tear.” Also at NAMBA is the Santa Barbara Community Flute Ensemble Holiday Show on Dec. 16.

The Channel Islands Chamber Orchestra ([www.CHICOVC.org](http://www.CHICOVC.org)) presents Hark! A CHICO Holiday Concert. Some of the pieces that will be performed include “Hansel and Gretel Overture” by Engelbert Humperdinck, selections from Tchaikovsky's *Nutcracker Suite*, Handel's “Harp Concerto,” and classic holiday carols. (Ranch Campana High School Performing Arts Center on Nov. 30 and First United Methodist Church in Ventura on Dec. 2).

African American Journeys Through Song, performed by The Channel Islands Chorale Association ([www.cicachoir.org](http://www.cicachoir.org)), traces “African American history through traditional and

modern spirituals, as well as music influenced by them.” (CSU Channel Islands, on Dec. 3 and St. Columba’s Episcopal Church, Camarillo, on Dec. 9).

The Holiday Lighting of the Mast at Oxnard’s Channel Islands Maritime Museum on Dec. 8 ([www.cimmvc.org](http://www.cimmvc.org)) is a brand-new tradition that includes the lighting of the 75-foot tall ship mast that stands in front of the museum, carolers, singalongs and a visit from Santa. Miles away, the Ronald Reagan Library ([www.reaganfoundation.org](http://www.reaganfoundation.org)) in Simi Valley is already bedecked in seasonal splendor. Outside, the trees sparkle with lights and holiday music fills the air. Twenty-five trees are decorated to “celebrate defining moments” of American history and beautiful handcrafted menorahs are on display. Count on the Simi Valley Cultural Arts Center to bring something cheeky to the holiday season. This year, it presents *Plaid Tidings*, (Dec. 15-30, [www.simi-arts.org](http://www.simi-arts.org)), the “holiday jukebox musical” from the same folks responsible for *Forever Plaid*. It’s filled with seasonal songs from the ’50s and ’60s, goofy antics and lots of laughs.

All this just scratches the surface of the festive events in store for the holidays, and they aren’t coming a moment too soon. To paraphrase a line from a well-loved song, “We need a little holiday cheer now.” Ventura County, you deserve it.

<https://www.vcreporter.com/2018/11/pipers-piping-lords-a-leaping-music-ballet-theater-and-more-to-light-up-the-season/>