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Cal Poly Early Music Ensemble to Perform ‘Mission Milestones’ May 24

Music Professor Craig Russell to Discuss Works and Perform Baroque Guitar

SAN LUIS OBISPO — The Cal Poly Early Music Ensemble, under the direction of music Professor Thomas Davies, will present “Mission Milestones” at 8 p.m. Friday, May 24, in Mission San Luis Obispo de Tolosa.

Music Professor Craig Russell, an expert in California Mission music, will join the ensemble and discuss the works to be performed.

The program will explore some of the core repertoire from California’s Mission Period in commemoration of the 300th anniversary of the birth of Father Junipero Serra. Russell reconstructed the music from original manuscripts.

Featured will be the “Misa del quarto tono” (Mass in mode 4) that Serra and his fellow friars used during Lent and Holy Week. “The charming and ‘classical-sounding’ pieces ‘O qué suave!’ and ‘O Rey de corazones’ were communion pieces used outside the mission in the open air and were almost certainly used at the founding of the San Luis Obispo mission, as they were used at the founding of other missions in both Baja and Alta California,” Russell said. “The processional ‘Lauda Sion Salvatorem’ was also used during founding days and attracted the First Nations peoples of California through its catchy melody and accompaniment to the friars’ and soldiers’ ‘parade.’”

The program will conclude with Ignacio de Jerusalem’s Mass in F, the composer’s most pastoral-sounding work. “This piece surely resonated with the local populace through its catchy tunes and its ‘naturalness,’” Russell said. “Few things were prized more than ‘nature’ and ‘being natural’ at that time.”

The 16 members of the Cal Poly Early Music Ensemble will be joined by several student and professional instrumentalists, including harpist Jennifer Sayre. Russell will join the instrumentalists on Baroque guitar.

Tickets to the concert are $12 for the public and $9 for senior citizens and students. They are on sale at the Performing Arts Ticket Office between noon and 6 p.m. Tuesday through Saturday. To order by phone, call SLO-4TIX (756-4849).

The Music Department offers a 10 percent discount to patrons who buy season tickets to four of its events through the Performing Arts Ticket Office; a 15 percent discount is given on tickets to five or more events.

The concert is sponsored by Cal Poly’s College of Liberal Arts, Music Department, and Instructionally Related Activities Program. For more information, call the Music Department at 805-756-2406.

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