FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Cal Poly Professor Brings Sound of Music To Patients at Atascadero State Hospital

A Cal Poly Music Department faculty member is bringing the sound of music -- live classical guitar music, that is -- to patients at Atascadero State Hospital.

Guitar instructor and director of the university's Guitar Ensemble Jesús Saiz-Huedo gave a recital at the hospital earlier this month and plans to give another, with the 10-member Guitar Ensemble, May 7.

The recitals are made possible through the efforts of Karen Johnson, music therapist at Atascadero State Hospital, who invited Saiz-Huedo to participate in the institution's music therapy program.

"At ASH," Johnson said, "music is used to restore, maintain and improve mental health. Music is effective in therapy because it is able to reach any level of development, any culture, any age group, any mental or physical impairment -- and any behavior."

Saiz-Huedo agrees that music can serve more useful social purposes than mere entertainment.

"When I was being presented to the audience of patients, I thought they were just hanging around -- not especially interested in the occasion," Saiz-Huedo said. "I was wrong. Right after I started my first piece, I felt them turning around to see me play, and immediately I felt I was giving a classical guitar concert to a regular audience.

"I understand this happened because the music therapy program is really having an impact on every patient at the hospital," Saiz-Huedo said. "I know now that music at ASH is big and present in every patient and is a very effective tool in helping cure their disorders. It was very rewarding to feel that my musical efforts were useful and had some value and meaning."
"The realization that our long hours of study and practice are useful in our community and society is something I want my Cal Poly students to experience themselves. That is why we are putting together a second recital at ASH."

For the next recital, Saiz-Huedo and guitar, voice and flute students who are members or collaborators of the Cal Poly Guitar Ensemble plan to perform Concerto in D by Vivaldi and other works by Mozart, Haydn, Falla and Scott Joplin.

Saiz-Huedo has performed widely in England, France, Germany, Holland, Spain and the United States. He came to San Luis Obispo from Spain in 1998 as a visiting music specialist for Paso Robles public schools and has taught classical guitar at Cal Poly since 1999.

As director of the Cal Poly Guitar Ensemble, he has presented a number of programs aimed at making guitar students active participants in the music life of the community. One of the programs, Literacy Through Music, was awarded a PG&E grant in 2001. In that project, Cal Poly music students collaborated with Paso Robles elementary and high school teachers and students to combine music with the teaching and learning of reading, writing and speaking.

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(NOTE TO EDITORS: The May 7 recital at Atascadero State Hospital is not open to the public, but members of the media are invited to attend. Please contact ASH's Public Relations Officer Barrie Hafler at 468-2008 or bhafler@dmhash.state.ca.us to make arrangements. The concert begins at 7 p.m. For more information, contact Saiz-Huedo at jsai@tcsn.net or Jo Ann Lloyd at 756-1511 or jlloyd@calpoly.edu. For an electronic image of Saiz-Huedo, contact Lloyd.)