

# The beat on the street

*Palo Altans seek performers for World Music Day*

by Ashley Ramirez

**W**orld Music Day is scheduled to take over the street corners of University Avenue in Palo Alto on the longest day of the year, June 21.

Musicians will perform free concerts in a wide range of musical genres: jazz, Latin, opera, pop, rock and others. The vision for World Music Day has 30 to 40 musicians and bands performing in about 20 locations from 5 to 8 p.m. Palo Alto residents Claude Ezran and Olana Hirsch Khan, members of the city's Human Relations Commission, are leading the organization.

World Music Day started in France 27 years ago and quickly spread to other countries. It's held on the same date every year; nearby cities celebrating this day include Woodside, San Francisco and Oakland.

After Ezran attended a World Music Day festival in London last year, he thought this would be a perfect idea for Palo Alto. He quickly grew fond of all the types of music, the enthusiasm from the crowds and the mix of cultures.

"We are encouraging diversity, variety of music, music from different countries," Ezran said. "We're looking for musicians both amateur and professional, volunteers and donations."

On March 16, the Palo Alto City

Council unanimously supported the establishment of World Music Day and decided to waive all permit fees for the event.

"I'd just like to not only commend it for its intrinsic value in music, but also for the underlying value it has to building a multicultural community," Councilman Pat Burt said.

Councilman Sid Espinosa added his approval, saying, "I want to see this be a huge success, one we do year after year."

Ezran is hoping to attract a dozen volunteers to help with the organization and managing of the bands prior to and on the day of the event. Musicians will not be paid to play, but will be given the opportunity for exposure, he said.

Donations are also welcome, to go toward more marketing and advertising for the occasion, Ezran said. He noted that he wasn't yet sure what the event's entire budget would be.

So far, some of the event sponsors are the Palo Alto Chamber of Commerce, Palo Alto Downtown Business and Professional Association, News for Chinese, Palo Alto Weekly and Palo Alto Online.

Musicians already scheduled to perform include Aodh Og O Tuama and Christy Martin of the Celtic, folk and world music band Four



Veronica Weber

*Claude Ezran is one of the lead organizers planning to bring World Music Day, a free festival of concerts, to downtown Palo Alto in June.*

Shillings Short. They are also both part of the organizing committee.

Ezran and Khan say World Music Day presents a great opportunity for the Palo Alto community. The event is free and has a good chance to bring in extra revenue to downtown businesses, Ezran said. Under the plan, University Avenue will not

be closed off — musicians will perform on the corners and sidewalks.

"Everyone can use a little fun right now," he said enthusiastically. "This is good for families and kids; it's not too late in the evening."

Ezran, who referred to the event as "Christmas caroling on a grander scale," says he plans to measure the

success by comparing crowds and asking for feedback and what to improve on in hopes of continuing the festival in 2010.

For more information, or to apply to perform or volunteer, go to [www.pamusicday.org](http://www.pamusicday.org) or e-mail Ezran and Khan at [pamusicday@gmail.com](mailto:pamusicday@gmail.com). ■