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## Spring schedule slows for high school use

Mar 5 2004 12:00AM By

Turkey's Mesut Ozgen to perform multimedia classical guitar concert

When I began writing this column last November, we had shows coming up week after week, sometimes two or three. As spring approaches, our schedule slows down and the Pajaro Valley Unified School District will use the Mello Center more frequently. This is a system that works well for the community as a whole.

Theaters are extremely expensive buildings. Not every town or city can afford one.

In the late 1980s, a survey was conducted in San Francisco to assess facilities being used by performing arts groups. None of the facilities being used at that time had been built for that purpose. Most had been built as warehouses or churches - both having large open spaces that could be adapted to public assembly and a stage area.

In fact, at the time of the construction of the Yerba Buena Center for the Performing Arts, there hadn't been a new theater built in San Francisco since before The Quake - the '06 earthquake, that is.

The Henry J. Mello Center for the Performing Arts is a treasure in many ways. That it is one of the few new theater facilities on the Central Coast is significant. That it is effectively shared by the community and the school district is unique.

So we don't mind slowing down a bit. We need the rest. And the students of the PVUSD will benefit from the opportunity to perform their plays, talent shows and other events in a real theater - one without a basketball hoop at the end.

And speaking of basketball: I found a fascinating article written by our Artist in Residence Mesut Ozgen about a concert he had put together in 2001 that included a basketball player on stage as a percussionist. The article explains how the basketball fit into the concert he was putting on.

There will be no basketball players in Mesut's upcoming concert at the Mello, but it will be an extremely complex and entertaining visual extravaganza, accompanying Mesut's classical guitar. Each composition will be complemented by a visual composition comprising video (by Gustavo Vazquez), interactive computer images (by Peter Elsea) and particularized lighting design and stage choreography (by David Lee Cuthbert).

Mesut Ozgen is a native of Turkey. He was a medical doctor and amateur guitarist.

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"When I was working as a doctor in Turkey, I was a self-taught guitarist," he wrote in his article. "I met (composer) Ben Verdery in a guitar festival in Cordoba, Spain in 1989. I was very impressed with his playing, teaching and personality. He invited me to study with him at Yale School of Music. I decided to quit medicine and came to the United States in 1991."

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Mesut is now the director of the Classical Guitar Program at UC Santa Cruz. His upcoming performance "New Dimensions in Classical Guitar" will be performed at the Mello Center on Saturday, March 13 at 7:30 p.m. Tickets cost \$15; \$12 for seniors and students. For tickets, call 763-4047.

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*Pamela Mason is the executive director of the Pajaro Valley Performing Arts Association, a nonprofit organization that manages and maintains the Mello Center on behalf of the community.*

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