



# Santa Barbara Trust for Historic Preservation

To Bring Alive the History of Santa Barbara for Present and Future Generations

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## PRESS RELEASE

### FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**ADDITIONAL PHOTOS AVAILABLE UPON REQUEST**

### PRESS CONTACT

Jared Brach

Santa Barbara Trust for Historic Preservation (SBTHP)

Tel: (805) 966-1279

Fax: (805) 966-9888

E-mail: [jared@sbthp.org](mailto:jared@sbthp.org)

Website: [www.sbthp.org](http://www.sbthp.org)

***La Pastorela (A Shepherds Play) returns to El Presidio de Santa Barbara State Historic Park – Santa Barbara’s oldest and most beautiful Christmas tradition is back at the Presidio after more than a decade***

(Santa Barbara, CA) – The Santa Barbara Trust for Historic Preservation (SBTHP) and Los Pastores de Santa Barbara are pleased to present the return of *La Pastorela* at El Presidio de Santa Barbara State Historic Park, 123 E. Canon Perdido St., Santa Barbara, California. Performances are Saturday, December 20 at 7PM and Sunday, December 21 at 2PM and 7PM. Tickets are available at the door, \$5 for adults, children 16 and under are free. Seating is limited. First come, first served. For more information call (805) 965-0093 or visit [www.sbthp.org](http://www.sbthp.org)



**One of Santa Barbara's oldest and most beautiful Christmas traditions, *La Pastorela* (A Shepherds Play) is the tale of the *pastores* or shepherds journey to Bethlehem to witness the birth of Christ. The ultimate story of good and evil, their journey is fraught with temptations, distractions and peril as the devil tries to prevent the shepherds from reaching**

their special destination. While hundreds of unique versions of the play exist, **this *pastorela* was transcribed and saved in the mid-nineteenth century by Pablo de la Guerra, then-patriarch of the prominent local de la Guerra family. De la Guerra's version, based on performances he witnessed in Santa Barbara, is housed at the Santa Barbara Mission Archive Library among the de la Guerra family papers and is conducted entirely in Spanish—incorporating early California song and dance.**



***La Pastorela* is directed by Elvira Gomez Tafoya of Los Pastores de Santa Barbara.**

Tafoya has been involved in *La Pastorela* performances in Santa Barbara since 1975, and has successfully collaborated several times with SBTHP, operators of El Presidio de Santa Barbara State Historic Park, to conduct performances in the Presidio Chapel. Keeping with tradition, **Los Pastores has recruited amateur actors from the community to take**

**on the ten principle roles in the play. For the first time since 1995, *La Pastorela* will return to the Presidio Chapel, the first Catholic Church in Santa Barbara, and part of the city's original Spanish settlement, founded in 1782. Elvira Tafoya, an accomplished teacher and organizer in the Santa Barbara community for the past 34 years notes:** "We are excited to have Pastorela back at the Presidio. This project gives us the opportunity to keep a Mexican tradition alive and to share it with the entire community"

**Karen Schultz Anderson, Director of Education at SBTHP, says,** "La Pastorela is a wonderful project that enables SBTHP to carry out its mission to 'bring alive the history of Santa Barbara for present and future generations.' It supports our educational efforts to share Santa Barbara's diverse heritage with a broad audience, in a way that is both interesting and relevant in our lives today. We are delighted to continue this collaboration that contributes so much to the Santa Barbara community."

The *pastorela* is a folk art form that has been performed in Europe since the middle ages. Catholic missionaries brought "miracle and morality" plays like *pastorela* to Spanish colonies in the Americas in the eighteenth century as a means to teach the principals of Catholicism. **In Hispanic America the plays soon transformed in plot and dialogue and became the region's most popular form of theatre** taking on the human elements of spectacle, comedy, fantasy, and reflecting a local sense of place and culture. **The *pastorela* tradition transferred orally between generations, surviving centuries of political, economic, and social**

**change. *La Pastorela* has become a holiday tradition and continues to be performed in various styles throughout Latin America.**

**About the 2008 *La Pastorela*** – A ninety-minute traditional Christmas play, the drama is divided into three scenes. **Scene One:** On a cold, snowy night a group of weary shepherds see a magnificent star and hear angelic voices. An old and holy hermit joins the shepherds as they settle down to a meal of wine, turnovers, tamales and cheese. **Scene Two:** As the group falls asleep, the devil suddenly appears intent upon corrupting the simple, unsuspecting shepherds. The devil, in eight sonnets, soon realizes that he is beyond the pale of redemption since Christ has brought redemption only to humans. The devil is banished and St. Michael tells the shepherds of the Savior's birth. Awed and filled with joy they begin their journey to Bethlehem. **Scene Three:** The Shepherds approach the nativity scene with a joyful carol. The group kneels before the Christ child offering simple gifts. Suddenly they realize that Bartolo, the lazy, gluttonous shepherd is not among them. The final scene is full of laughter and relief when Bartolo yields to the urging of his fellow shepherds and joins them in celebration.

**This event is made possible with support from The Towbes Foundation and the Williams-Corbett Foundation and in part by the Community Arts Grant Program using funds provided by the City of Santa Barbara in partnership with the Santa Barbara County Arts Commission.**

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## **CALENDAR LISTING**

*La Pastorela*

### **DATE & TIME**

Saturday, December 20 at 7PM

Sunday, December 21 at 2PM and 7PM

### **WHERE**

El Presidio de Santa Barbara SHP

123 East Canon Perdido Street, Santa Barbara, CA 93101

### **ADMISSION**

\$5 for Adults; Children 16 and under are FREE

Tickets available at the door | Seating is limited

### **FOR MORE INFORMATION**

Visit [www.sbthp.org](http://www.sbthp.org) or call (805) 965-0093

## SHORT DESCRIPTION

Returning this year to the Presidio Chapel—*La Pastorela* is Santa Barbara's oldest and most beautiful Christmas tradition. Dramatizing the epic battle between good and evil the play invokes elements of spectacle, comedy and fantasy. This version of the *pastorela* was transcribed in the mid-nineteenth century by Pablo de la Guerra and will be conducted in Spanish.

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**ABOUT the Santa Barbara Trust for Historic Preservation (SBTHP)** – Founded in 1963 by Dr. Pearl Chase and other concerned community leaders, the Santa Barbara Trust for Historic Preservation is a 501(c) 3 nonprofit organization working to preserve, restore, reconstruct and interpret historic sites within Santa Barbara County. SBTHP is the primary force behind the reconstruction and preservation of El Presidio de Santa Barbara State Historic Park and the restoration of Casa de la Guerra in downtown Santa Barbara. SBTHP is also preserving and restoring the Santa Inés Mission Mills—the site of a future California State Park and recently purchased the building that housed Jimmy's Oriental Gardens, providing an opportunity to interpret the history of Santa Barbara's Asian community in the Presidio neighborhood. **SBTHP is currently reconstructing the Northwest Corner of El Presidio de Santa Barbara, the eighteenth-century Spanish colonial fort that is Santa Barbara's birthplace.** Using over 50,000 adobe bricks made on site, these additions will eventually house the new Presidio visitors' center, and with the help of the new Santa Barbara Presidio Research Center, serve to interpret the city's Hispanic heritage, and the larger multi-cultural heritage of the surrounding Presidio neighborhood from the eighteenth century to the present. **For more information visit [www.sbthp.org](http://www.sbthp.org)**

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