



Photo: Robert Ellis

**Dance Kids of Monterey County has been presenting the magical holiday ballet "The Nutcracker" for 21 years. This year it comes to Carmel's Sunset Center Dec. 12-14.**

**Pacific Repertory Theatre's "The Legends of Rock and Roll Tribute Concert," opens at 7:30pm Saturday Dec. 27, runs through Jan. 4, 2015**

It was meant to be a one-off concert, but it proved to be so popular that PacRep brings it back every year for a limited holiday run, including a New Year's Eve gala with champagne, desserts and dancing. Local actor/musicians channel musical stars from the past, including Elvis, Little Richard, Jerry Lee Lewis, Dusty Springfield, Sam Cooke, Janis Joplin, Bob Dylan, Grace Slick, and more. It's such an ebullient, rollicking show that audiences are encouraged to dance in the aisles. [www.pacrep.org](http://www.pacrep.org)

**First Night Monterey, 3pm-midnight, Wednesday, Dec. 31, various locations downtown Monterey**

First created in Boston in 1976, this family-friendly, alcohol-free New Year's Eve celebration of the arts is now held in more than 200 cities in the US, Canada and beyond. The party came to Monterey in 1992 and has evolved into one of the best events of the year on the Monterey Peninsula, with 50 venues indoors and outdoors, an incredible variety of musicians, dancers, singers, poets, artists, performance artists and more. It's become the liveliest and most artistic way to ring in the New Year. [www.firstnightmonterey.com](http://www.firstnightmonterey.com)

**Mavis Staples, 3pm Sunday, Jan. 18, Sunset Center, Carmel**

The Chicago Tribune calls her an "American treasure." Grammy Award-winning musician/producer Don Was says, "She is truly one of the most powerful and inspiring American singers of all time." Staples, over a 50-year career that includes induction in the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame with The Staple Singers ("Respect Yourself"), has become a true icon of American roots music. She won her first Grammy in 2010 for her collaboration with Wilco's Jeff Tweedy and recently released her

second collaboration with Tweedy, "One True Vine" that should further solidify her glowing reputation. [www.sunsetcenter.org](http://www.sunsetcenter.org)

**Whalefest Monterey, 10am-5pm Saturday-Sunday Jan. 24-25, 2015, Old Fisherman's Wharf, Monterey**

Even though whales are spotted in Monterey Bay year-round—witness this past summer's stunning visit by hundred of humpbacks—January is the traditional migration period for gray whales past our shores. Whalefest Monterey, sponsored by The Old Fisherman's Wharf Association, is a free family event that not only imparts a wealth of information about cetaceans, but benefits a number of local marine conservation organizations. Tons of fun activities are in store during the two-day event at Custom House Plaza and Fisherman's Wharf, including live music, a bocce tournament, interactive art, films, lectures and more. [www.montereywharf.com](http://www.montereywharf.com)

*Mac McDonald was the editor and music columnist for the Monterey County Herald's GO! entertainment and dining section for 22 years. He currently is a freelance writer and editor covering a variety of subjects, from music to wine and food.*



Photo: Ashley Tedesco

**Whalefest Monterey, a free family-friendly event, celebrates all things cetacean Jan. 24-25, 2015, at Old Fisherman's Wharf and Custom House Plaza in Monterey.**