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CALENDAR

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PHOTO BY ED KREIGER

TRIP Dance Theater

MEET ME AT THE CORNER OF AVE MARIA AND GRAND

AS HE DOES EVERY YEAR, Santa Claus comes early to Los Angeles, bringing a spectacular gift of free holiday entertainment at the Music Center. Starting Wednesday afternoon with a jazz medley performed by the 70-member Henry Mancini Institute Orchestra, and lasting into the evening, the L.A. County Holiday Celebration features more than 1,000 performers in 38 different groups representing the Southland's diverse holiday traditions through music and dance. You'll enjoy a Haitian carol by the Compton High School Choir; a traditional Korean fan dance from the Jung Im Lee Korean Dance Academy; Persian music played on a santoor (hammered dulcimer) by Manoochehr Sadeghi; and Hanukkah songs vocalized by the

Valley Beth Shalom Congregational Choir, with live musical accompaniment by members of the Los Angeles Jewish Symphony. Traditional Yuletide carols will be sung by several groups including the Greater Ebenezer Missionary Baptist Church Inspirational Choir, the Los Angeles Citywide Children's Christian Choir, the Salvation Army Tabernacle Children's Chorus, Gwen Wyatt Chorale and the Gay Men's Chorus of Los Angeles. Dance groups include Backhaus Dance, Aqualuna Dance Company, JazzAntiqua Dance & Music Ensemble, Sakoba Dance Theater and, performing in special tribute to the late Gregory Hines, the Jazz Tap Ensemble. The TRIP Dance Theater closes the show with an encore performance of *When It Snows*, a modern-dance piece about the calming effects of snow on the urban environment. (*Calming* — ha!) For those waiting in line to attend

the often-packed event, there'll be free entertainment in the Music Center Plaza. (All of the Music Center restaurants will be open, but, alas, no free eats.) And for those unable to attend, the festivities will be shown live on KCET, with a condensed version rebroadcast Dec. 25, 10 p.m.

—Sandra Ross

L.A. County Holiday Celebration Dorothy Chandler Pavilion, 135 N. Grand Ave., downtown; Wed., Dec. 24, 3-9 p.m.; free admission and parking; no reservations are necessary, and concert-goers may stay for all or part of the six-hour show. Doors open at 2:30 p.m., and seating is on a first come, first served basis. (213) 972-3099 or www.holidaycelebration.org.