

## Getting tuned up



KAREN T. BORCHERS — MERCURY NEWS

A mountain-bike rider pedals toward UC-Santa Cruz's new Music Center, which will be dedicated Thursday. The building's largest section is the 400-seat recital hall.

# Enthusiasm surrounds new Music Center at university

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University of California-Santa Cruz officials this week will formally christen the campus's new Music Center, in which the cutting-edge recital hall already has struck a chord among local audiophiles since its opening earlier this year.

Chancellor M.R.C. Greenwood will dedicate the Music Center at a private ceremony Thursday for University of California regents and local dignitaries. The event will feature opera, classical and Balinese village music per-

formed by faculty members and students.

Audiences have been flocking to the center's 400-seat recital hall since its unveiling in January. Attendance for the university's spring choir and orchestra concerts, for example, rose from 384 last year to 602 this year, campus spokeswoman Barbara McKenna said.

Greenwood said in a statement this week that since the center opened, the university's music program "has already experienced an increase in interest ... by potential students and

their parents, performers and audience members."

Designed by award-winning New Mexico architect Antoine Predock, the 49,000-square-foot center has been trumpeted by critics as a "singing boulder" whose subtle design blends into the rim of a meadow overlooking Monterey Bay. The sightlines of its hallways and courtyards take in the surrounding gullies, slopes and canyons.

The acoustic design of the \$11 million recital hall is considered among

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## Music Center to be dedicated

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the most advanced in the country. Like the instruments played within, it can actually be "tuned," by adjusting curtains over sound baffles around the room.

"One of the problems with a lot of halls is that they were built for theater," said Ernest T. "Bud" Kretschmer, a local arts patron and supporter of the university music program. "This is strictly music. It has acoustic devices that provide a tone critics have called 'delicious.'"

Begun in November 1994, the center was conceived a decade ago out of concern that growth in the university's music program would overcome its accommodations, formerly shared with the theater and performing arts department.

Undergraduate enrollment in the music program rose from 154

in 1983 to 279 last year, McKenna said. With the completion of the new center, the university is offering a new doctorate program emphasizing cultural musicology and algorithmic composition.

"These new spaces enable us to grow in the kinds of courses and performances we can offer, the quality of students and faculty we can attract," said Edward Houghton, dean of the university's arts division.