

✓ EDUCATION SJM 4-28-91 1B

Record achievement



Paul Kitagaki Jr. — Mercury News

Ten-year-old T.J. Magallanos, center, raises his guitar after 457 musicians played a record-setting 59 minutes, 33 seconds

Musical marathon raises \$10,000

By Steve Johnson
Mercury News Staff Writer

Hoisting their flutes, violins and other instruments, the kids from Loma Prieta Elementary tried bravely to keep up as the band on stage in downtown Santa Cruz tore into "Shake, Rattle and Roll."

But some of them had a little trouble following the electrified tune. And when the band's lead guitarist ripped into a searing and somewhat meandering solo, one

young clarinetist seemed to take a wrong turn somewhere and wander off on his own, several keys removed from the rest.

A few mistakes were understandable Saturday, what with 457 guitarists and other musicians playing the old hit together outdoors for a tad more than 59 minutes. The time will be registered with the Guinness Book of World Records for continuous performance of a single song by such a

large group of guitarists. More importantly, they raised at least \$10,000 for music programs at local schools.

With public educators critically short of money in California, the donations made a lot of folks at the festivities happy. Yet plenty of sour notes could be heard in the crowd, estimated at more than 1,000. And they didn't just come from musicians.

"It's wonderful the community

is doing something like this," said 49-year-old John Wortman, who teaches beginning band in the Santa Cruz and San Lorenzo Valley districts. But, he quickly added, "it's not going to save the city schools."

Like others at the fund-raiser Saturday, Wortman is saddened by the plight of public education, especially since so many cash-

See GUITARS, Page 3B

457 play to keep music in schools

GUITARS; from Page 1B

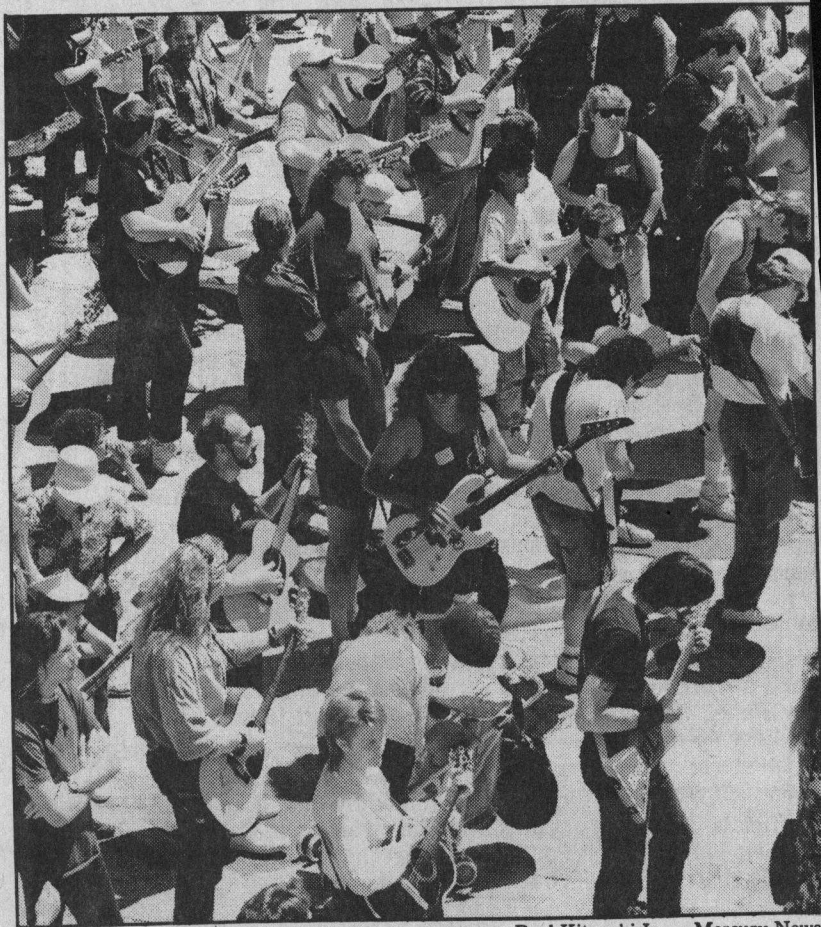
starved districts in California are trimming or eliminating their music programs. "I'm leaving the state because of this," he said. "What does a kid get for his education these days?"

Michelle Underwood, 33, whose 13-year-old son, Earl, goes to school in Watsonville, wonders the same thing.

Even though she gets Aid to Families with Dependent Children payments, "I'm all for that being cut before schools," she said. "It's too bad they're not going to give more funding for school music. I think everyone should have a chance to play. For a lot of kids, that's the only chance they have to learn music."

Organizers had hoped to attract more than the 532 guitarists who showed up last year. But the musicians Saturday managed to play more than 16 minutes longer than last year's group, setting a different record. And they filled the town's Pacific Street mall area with a thunderous noise that kept the crowd swaying and dancing.

Even a uniformed police officer could be seen doing the boogie-woogie as he strolled through the horde, his hands pounding away at an imaginary piano.



Paul Kitagaki Jr. — Mercury News

If you look carefully, you'll find a flutist and clarinetist among 457 musicians at Saturday session.

Several hundred elementary school band members from throughout the area played along.

The money raised will be put into a non-profit fund and then distributed to schools throughout the county, said Richard Gellis, who owns Union Grove Music in Santa Cruz and was primarily responsible for the event.

Last year's festivities also raised \$10,000, which was used to help repair damage caused by the 1989 earthquake, and Gellis had hoped

this year's event might bring in \$100,000. Although donations from student fund-raising activities haven't been counted yet, he doesn't anticipate reaching his goal. Even so, he considers the whole thing a success.

"The main purpose is to create community awareness" about schools and their music programs, he said. "You do what you can to keep these programs going."

Even though the money raised Saturday "won't do a lot," he said, "it's a start."