

# Lifelong Musician, Poet Premieres Latest Performance Piece

By JACQUELINE PRIMO  
Reporter

**M**ary Lou Newmark is a 17-year Highlands resident as well as a lifelong musician and poet. The classically trained violinist has taught the instrument at many local schools including Calvary Christian, Palisades Charter Elementary, Marquez Elementary Charter and Village School.

"A lot of children in the Palisades know me," Newmark told the *Palisadian-Post* in a late September interview.

For as long as Newmark has been musically inclined, she has also been an artist.

Her newest performance piece entitled "Breathing Room," for which she wrote all of the music and words, blends her knack for poetry and music into one show with dance, soundscapes, lighting, music, poetry, acting and humor all playing a part.

"I live near the edge of Topanga State Park and have a lot of encounters with wildlife," Newmark said, adding that she incorporates many of these personal experiences with hummingbirds and coyotes into the show.

The show itself is about a science teacher with a mysterious past (played by Charles Reese) and a visual artist overwhelmed by life (Eileen T'Kaye) as they explore our modern culture of "technological vertigo" in a series of playful and intriguing scenes infused with music—played live at

every performance by Newmark on her trademark neon-green electric violin.

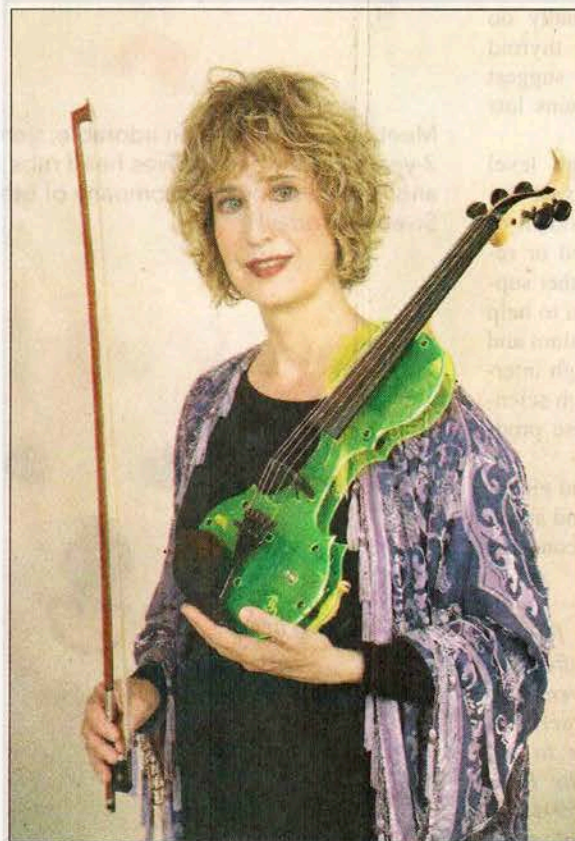
"'Breathing Room' is about how we engage with life and each other and nature," Newmark said. "This piece is really an invitation to open your heart, to see things from a different perspective. It's a joyful piece and it's something that has a lot of contemporary relevance to what people are dealing

and something [the audience members] are not going to expect," Newmark said of the show. "Everybody's going to come out of this with a different perspective. I'm not interested in presenting a particular point of view that everybody has to get on board with. It's about opening your heart, allowing for possibility and thinking about choices."

Newmark's other multimedia works include "Street Angel Diaries" and "Breath of Trees." She has toured around the country performing her original compositions and in 2010 premiered her electric violin concerto "Canto de Luz" at the Kirk Douglas Theater in Culver City.

In addition to writing and composing her original performance pieces and concertos, Newmark teaches violin to everybody from ages 6 to 60 and has been involved with the Children's Music Workshop in the Palisades for years, she told the *Post*.

Directed by Dan Berkowitz, performances of "Breathing Room" take place on Saturdays at 2 p.m. and 8 p.m., and on Sundays at 7 p.m. through Oct. 25 at the Greenway Court The-



Mary Lou Newmark with her neon green electric violin.

Photo: Ed Krieger

with at this point in history, and what we are going to do next."

Newmark herself is on stage the entire time, playing her acrylic green electric violin (which she has had for nearly 20 years) and sometimes reciting original poetry, the actors coming and going on stage.

"It's an unusual experience

atre in LA.

Tickets are \$25 for general admission, with reserved seats available for \$35. The Greenway Court Theatre is located at 544 N. Fairfax Ave., Los Angeles, CA 90036. To purchase tickets, call (323) 655-7679 x100 or go to [greenwaycourtheatre.org/breathing-room/](http://greenwaycourtheatre.org/breathing-room/).