

OJAI MUSIC FESTIVAL GOES GREEN(ER)

Libbey Park, an area once marked sacred by the ancient Chumash Indians and still cherished as a place where inspiration and creativity flourish, has been home to the Ojai Music Festival for more than six decades. For four days each June, the music of renowned artists ranging from Igor Stravinsky to Michael Tilson Thomas has been performed onstage at the Libbey Bowl, beneath live oaks and sycamores and surrounded by the mountains of the Los Padres National Forest, often with the local bird, cricket, and frog population providing spontaneous accompaniment.

While the Ojai Music Festival has always been aware of its responsibility to preserve and care for this piece of history for future generations, increasing demands on the planet due to climate change and pollution have inspired the Festival to initiate a multi-year effort to make the Festival more environmentally sensitive.

“As the caretaker of this outdoor music festival surrounded by nature’s beauty, we are keenly aware of the importance of our fragile environment, says Jeff Haydon, Executive Director. “We are happy to do our share in taking steps towards making our Festival more eco-friendly and encouraging our patrons to support our green initiative.”

“The possibilities inherent in going greener are very exciting,” adds Christine Drucker, Festival Board President. “The Festival has always been recognized for its visionary musical programming. Now, we are also applying our creativity towards producing an environmentally friendly Festival.”

With the help of Marty Fujita, an ecologist who founded a farm-to-school food program in local Ojai schools, and Green Team volunteers from the Ojai Valley Green Coalition, the Festival is reducing solid waste going to landfills, selecting merchandise and foods produced with minimal environmental impact, and supporting local farmers, merchants, and products.

Specifically, the Festival will be:

- Providing free water refills at water stations provided by H2Ojai, and encouraging concertgoers to bring their own reusable water bottles or to purchase stainless steel or ceramic mugs available at Festival concerts
- Encouraging residents to walk or bike to the Libbey Bowl and taking advantage of the free bike valet area
- Selling organic souvenir clothing using water-based printing, reusable totes and bags, and stainless steel containers for sale at the outdoor marketplace
- Assisting concertgoers to sort trash at “Zero Waste Stations” into appropriate receptacles
- Exhibiting a Festival Green Plan that provides concertgoers with information and background about why the above efforts are needed and what they can do, both at the Festival and in their daily lives, to minimize their own ecological footprints. The exhibit will include information from Harrison Industries, a supporting partner of the Ojai Music Festival, and H2Ojai, which will be supplying the free water refill stations

As part of the Festival Green Plan, the Ojai Music Festival is also introducing an Ojai market to sell gourmet food and baked goods that use organic and locally grown produce provided by Seasons Catering and Knead Bakery and as well as certified organic, shade-grown coffee provided by local shop, Coffee Connection, and Ojai-based Zhena’s organic teas.

Several Sunday Farmers Market vendors will be on hand with local Ojai items that include organic pixie tangerines from Churchill Orchards; olive oil, creams and soaps from Ojai Olive Oil; and Vicki’s hand-made scented soaps. In addition, Ojai Festival is partnering with Patagonia’s Childcare Center to have their signature Patagonia fleece throws available for sale, which will benefit Patagonia’s Childcare Center.

The 62nd Ojai Music Festival is June 5 to 8, 2008, at Ojai’s outdoor Libbey Bowl. This year’s music director is acclaimed conductor David Robertson, who will be joined by soprano Dawn Upshaw, composer Steve Reich, Nexus, So Percussion, Signal contemporary ensemble, and the Ojai Festival Orchestra. For more information and tickets, visit www.OjaiFestival.org or call (805) 646-2094.

April 30, 2008