

OJAI MUSIC FESTIVAL

In the Ojai Spirit

For more than six decades the Ojai Music Festival has been a laboratory for the special chemistry that results from combining insatiable curiosity with unbounded creativity. The formula is simple: Each year a music director is given the freedom and resources to imagine four days of musical brainstorming. Some have approached their task with caution, fearing that Ojai might be like other places. But, of course, it's not. More often this unique blend of enchanted setting and an audience voracious in its appetite for challenge and discovery has inspired a distinguished series of conductors, performers, composers to push at boundaries and stretch limits.

At its inception in 1947, under the guidance of Festival founder John Bauer and conductor Thor Johnson, the Festival featured a balance of classics and more contemporary fare. By the time Lawrence Morton took over as Artistic Director in 1954 the emphasis had shifted to new music and Ojai soon became the showcase as well as a home-away-from-home for such 20th century giants as Luciano Berio, Pierre Boulez, Elliott Carter, Aaron Copland, Lou Harrison, and Olivier Messiaen, not to mention two Southern California "locals": Arnold Schoenberg and Igor Stravinsky. It was Morton who established the tradition of rotating Music Directors and with this innovation each year's Festival became the reflection of a succession of larger-than-life personalities, including Robert Craft (joined in 1955 and 1956 by Stravinsky), Copland, Ingolf Dahl, the late Lukas Foss, Boulez, Peter Maxwell-Davies, as well as such rising stars as Michael Tilson Thomas, Calvin Simmons, Kent Nagano, John Adams, Esa-Pekka Salonen, Pierre-Laurent Aimard, and David Robertson. Through the years Ojai's Music Directors have invited distinguished soloists, first-rate chamber ensembles, and world-class orchestras to join them in exploring the intersection between new music and everything from jazz and improvisation to electronics and computers; dance, theater, and experimental staging to social and political issues, not to mention repertory that might go back to the Middle Ages or reach across the globe.

Looking back, it would be difficult to identify any overarching aesthetic premise, though from year to year there has been no shortage of agendas. Rather, the thread running through these past decades has been this Festival's consistency in promoting creativity and innovation. Here in Ojai hallowed masterpieces and in-your-face experiments can be uneasy bedfellows sharing a berth that is a pedestal of repose for one, a trampoline for the other. And that rumble you hear? It is the steady grumbling from an audience whose outspoken views on any and every subject are the entitlement of its loyalty. Its passion is the true barometer of the health of this Festival. No smugness here; no indifference, either. This is a place for enthusiasms, often excessive, and opinions, sometimes vociferous, and a hunger for shared discovery that reaffirms, year after year, why music matters in the first place.

-Christopher Hailey

Ojai Music Festival bio

The 66th Ojai Music Festival continues its unmatched musical legacy and international reputation for artistic excellence, adventurous programs, and creative artistic camaraderie. Ojai's tradition of inviting a new music director for each season guarantees variety and vitality across festivals. The 2012 Festival explores the musical interests, and celebrates the artistic collaborations of Music Director Leif Ove Andsnes, one of today's foremost pianists of our time. Since 1947, the Ojai Valley has remained the quintessential haven for passionate music lovers and trailblazing artists, and serves as a creative laboratory where extraordinary music-making and provocative discussions flourish. Thomas W. Morris, Artistic Director since 2004, and each appointed music director partner to create programs of wide-ranging repertoire and unexpected connections. Among the Festival's diverse music directors have been such renowned musical personalities as John Adams, Pierre-Laurent Aimard, George Benjamin, Pierre Boulez, Aaron Copland, Ingolf Dahl, Peter Maxwell Davies, eighth blackbird, Lukas Foss, John Harbison, Oliver Knussen, Kent Nagano, David Robertson, Esa-Pekka Salonen, Robert Spano, Igor Stravinsky, Michael Tilson Thomas, Dawn Upshaw, and Mitsuko Uchida. Considered a highlight of the summer classical music season, the Ojai Music Festival is a four-day series of concerts, symposia, and auxiliary events set in the idyllic Ojai Valley, known as California's Shangri-la. Located 90 miles northwest of Los Angeles, Ojai Music Festival concerts take place at the newly renovated outdoor Libbey Bowl, on a site held sacred by the Chumash Indians.

Ojai North!

An exciting multi-year partnership between the Ojai Music Festival and Cal Performances, *Ojai North!* takes residence in Berkeley launching this past June 2011, immediately following the Festival in Ojai. The brainchild of Ojai Music Festival Artistic Director Thomas W. Morris and Cal Performances Executive Director Matias Tarnopsky, *Ojai North!* features co-productions and co-commissions first performed at the Ojai Music Festival in Ojai, California.

"I have long admired the quality and breadth of programming at the Ojai Music Festival and am thrilled we can collaborate with this beacon of artistic endeavor to bring these concerts to Cal Performances audiences." Matias Tarnopsky, Executive Director of CalPerformances

"It has been a long-held dream of mine to broaden the reach of the Ojai Music Festival. In launching this partnership with Cal Performances – a colleague organization acclaimed for its commitment to musical adventure - we make this dream a reality." Thomas W. Morris, Artistic Director of Ojai Music Festival