

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

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MILESTONES

- 1947 May 4 - First concert features French baritone Martial Singher with Paul Ulanowsky in a recital covering repertoire from Rameau to Ravel at Ojai's Nordhoff Auditorium.
- 1948 Lawrence Morton becomes first program annotator and begins his association with the Festival; Igor Stravinsky's *Histoire du soldat* (A Soldier's Tale) is billed as the premiere of the final version of his work.
- 1949 Ojai Festivals, Ltd. is officially launched as a non-profit organization.
- 1952 The Festival holds first outdoor concert at the Libbey Bowl.
- 1953 Lukas Foss makes his first Ojai appearance as conductor.
- 1954 Lawrence Morton becomes first Artistic Director.
- 1955 Igor Stravinsky conducts his own works at the Festival.
- 1956 Stravinsky conducts his own *Les Noces* for Ojai audiences; permanent benches are added to the Libbey Bowl doubling the seating capacity to 750.
- 1957 Aaron Copland makes Ojai debut.
- 1960 For the first time, *all* Festival concerts are held at the Libbey Bowl.
- 1962 Jazz flutist Eric Dolphy performs *Density 21.5* for solo flute by Edgard Varèse; the Festival includes a four-day prelude of discussions lectures/concerts with Luciano Berio, Milton Babbitt, Gunther Schuller and Lukas Foss.
- 1963 Foss experiments with music from *Don Giovanni* using three orchestras to create a kind of stereophonic surround sound at the Bowl; Mauricio Kagel is guest composer/conductor.
- 1964 Ingolf Dahl (USC faculty composer) is Music Director and Ojai becomes a northern "outpost" for the USC's music department.
- 1965 19-year-old pianist Michael Tilson Thomas is featured in concert; Harold Shapero's *Serenade in D* for String Orchestra and Ramiro Cortes' *Concerto for Violin and Strings* are premiered.
- 1966 Ojai celebrates its 20th anniversary; David Raskin, film composer and friend of Lawrence Morton, writes five special fanfares for the Festival.
- 1967 Lawrence Morton returns as Artistic Director; Pierre Boulez makes his Ojai debut in his fifth American appearance; Boulez delays the start time of a performance to allow the Santa Paula Railroad "Orange" train to pass.

- 1968 Pianist James Levine makes a guest appearance; Ingolf Dahl is Music Director once again and the Debut Orchestra of the Young Musicians Foundation is in residence.
- 1969 The trio of Michael Tilson Thomas, Michael Zearott and Stefan Minde lead the Festival as co-Music Directors.
- 1970 Boulez returns for his second visit to Ojai and includes the first American performance of his *Domaines*; the Los Angeles Philharmonic makes its Ojai debut.
- 1971 Ojai celebrates its 25th anniversary; Gerhard Samuel makes first appearance as conductor and Artistic Director; Lou Harrison's Chinese Classical Music Ensemble presents a morning concert of Chinese music.
- 1972 Ethnic music is highlighted under the baton of Michael Zearott including Mariachi music from Jalisco, Mexico, drum music from West Africa and the Balinese group, Gamelan Angklung.
- 1973 Michael Tilson Thomas is Music Director for the next three seasons; Tilson Thomas brings minimalism to Ojai with Steve Reich's *Four Organs with Percussion* plus John Cage's *Three Dances for Two Amplified Prepared Pianos*, both in their West Coast premieres; annual jazz concerts begin in Ojai.
- 1975 Charles Wuorinen's *A Reliquary for Igor Stravinsky*, a joint Ojai Festival/Buffalo Philharmonic commission, is given its world premiere.
- 1976 Copland returns to Ojai as does Lawrence Morton as Artistic Director.
- 1978 Young African-American conductor Calvin Simmons (assistant conductor of the Los Angeles Philharmonic) takes the baton as Music Director; Stravinsky's *Oedipus Rex* is performed.
- 1980 Sequoia Quartet, UC San Diego-based SONOR and the Los Angeles Ballet perform.
- 1981 USC Symphony's director Daniel Lewis is the Festival Music Director; the program includes the West Coast premiere of Benjamin Britten's *Our Hunting Fathers* with tenor Jonathan Mack and the U.S. premiere of Clementi's Symphony No. 4.
- 1982 The Festival presents a Stravinsky Centennial with Robert Craft as Music Director featuring all or part of nearly 40 compositions by the master in his honor.
- 1983 The Kronos Quartet and The Musicians of Swanee Alley make their Ojai debuts; Ravi Shankar returns.
- 1985 Under the recommendation of Pierre Boulez, young conductor Kent Nagano makes his first Ojai appearance as Music Director; The music of Olivier Messiaen is highlighted and attends his first Ojai Festival; Messiaen's wife Yvonne Loriod performs in a piano recital.
- 1986 Due to the success of his first Ojai Festival, Nagano is invited to return as Music Director; Composer-conductor-percussionist Stephen "Lucky" Mosko conducts Saturday evening's concert, which includes the West Coast premiere of John Adams' *The Chairman Dances*.

- 1987 Lukas Foss comes back to Ojai; the Festival is dedicated to Lawrence Morton who passes away earlier in the year.
- 1988 Peter Maxwell-Davies is composer-in-residence; Nicholas McGegan is Music Director along with his Philharmonia Baroque Orchestra, which was also in residence this season.
- 1989 The Festival highlights the work of composer György Ligeti; Boulez is Music Director.
- 1990 Stephen “Lucky” Mosko returns but this time as Music Director and Elliott Carter is the composer-in-residence; for the first time in Festival history there is no music from the past or music by any European composers.
- 1992 Boulez as Music Director brings famed director Peter Sellars to Ojai; Sellars stages Stravinsky’s *Histoire du soldat* in its fifth incarnation in Ojai; however, he re-stages the work using inner-city actors in the cast and the back of a flatbed pick-up truck as part of the setting; Ara Guzelimian is named Artistic Director.
- 1993 John Adams makes his first Ojai appearance as Music Director highlighting the work of Cage, Reich and Gorecki.
- 1994 For his seventh Festival, Michael Tilson Thomas journeys back to Ojai as Music Director along with his New World Symphony.
- 1996 The 50th Anniversary of the Ojai Music Festival is led by Pierre Boulez; pianist Mitsuko Uchida makes her first appearance at the Festival.
- 1997 Pianist Emanuel Ax is Music Director; Daniel Harding is principal conductor; Artistic Director Ara Guzelimian bids farewell to Festival.
- 1998 Ernest Fleischmann begins his tenure as the Festival’s third Artistic Director; Mitsuko Uchida is Music Director; David Zinman is principal conductor.
- 1999 Esa-Pekka Salonen makes his Ojai debut and creates a program dedicated to Finnish music. Composer in residence is Magnus Lindberg.
- 2000 Sir Simon Rattle makes his Ojai debut as Music Director; the Festival features the U.S. premiere of Mark-Anthony Turnage’s *Kai* and the West Coast premiere of Thomas Ades’ *Asyla*.
- 2002 Marking the first time for a group, the Emerson String Quartet is Music Director.
- 2004 Kent Nagano returns, this time with his Los Angeles Opera Orchestra, which makes its Ojai debut; Thomas W. Morris begins his tenure as the Festival’s fourth Artistic Director; the Festival presents the world premiere of Korean composer Unsuk Chin’s *SNAGS & SNARLS*.
- 2005 British composer-conductor Oliver Knussen is Festival Music Director. British composer Jonathan Cole’s *Testament*, a joint commission by the Sue Knussen Commissioning Fund, London Sinfonietta and the Ojai Festival, is given its world premiere. Featured artists include The Cleveland Orchestra and its Music Director Franz Welser-Most.

- 2006 Robert Spano is Music Director in his Ojai debut, and Osvaldo Golijov is composer in residence of 60th Ojai Music Festival. Golijov's revised concert version of *Ainadamar* is given its West Coast premiere, and featured artists include Atlanta Symphony Orchestra and Chamber Chorus and Dawn Upshaw.
- 2007 Pierre-Laurent Aimard is Music Director, and Peter Eötvös is composer in residence. Featured artists include The Saint Paul Chamber Orchestra, Nexus Percussion Ensemble, and Douglas Boyd.
- 2008 David Robertson is Music Director with composer Steve Reich in residence. Featured artists include soprano Dawn Upshaw, actress Barbara Sukowa, contemporary ensembles Signal and So Percussion, Nexus, and conductor Brad Lubman.
- 2009 eighth blackbird is second ensemble to be Music Director of Ojai Music Festival. World premiere of Steve Mackey's *Slide* featuring Rinde Eckert is a highlight. Other Festival artists are Tin Hat, Jeremy Denk, and recorder ensemble QNG.

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MUSIC DIRECTORS

1947	Thor Johnson	1981	Daniel Lewis
1948	Thor Johnson and Edward Rebner	1982	Robert Craft
1949	Thor Johnson	1983	Daniel Lewis
1950	Thor Johnson	1984	Pierre Boulez
1951	William Steinberg	1985	Kent Nagano
1952	Thor Johnson	1986	Kent Nagano and Stephen Mosko
1953	Thor Johnson	1987	Lukas Foss
1954	Robert Craft	1988	Nicholas McGegan, Sir Peter Maxwell Davies, and Diane Wittry
1955	Robert Craft, Igor Stravinsky	1989	Pierre Boulez
1956	Robert Craft, Igor Stravinsky	1990	Stephen Mosko
1957	Aaron Copland, Ingolf Dahl	1991	John Harbison, Sir Peter Maxwell Davies
1958	Aaron Copland	1992	Pierre Boulez
1959	Robert Craft	1993	John Adams
1960	Henri Temianka	1994	Michael Tilson Thomas
1961	Lukas Foss	1995	Kent Nagano
1962	Lukas Foss	1996	Pierre Boulez
1963	Lukas Foss	1997	Emanuel Ax, Daniel Harding
1964	Ingolf Dahl	1998	Mitsuko Uchida, David Zinman
1965	Ingolf Dahl	1999	Esa-Pekka Salonen
1966	Ingolf Dahl	2000	Sir Simon Rattle
1967	Pierre Boulez	2001	Esa-Pekka Salonen
1968	Robert LaMarchina, Lawrence Foster, and Michael Tilson Thomas	2002	Emerson String Quartet
1969	Michael Zearott, Stefan Minde, and Michael Tilson Thomas	2003	Pierre Boulez
1970	Pierre Boulez	2004	Kent Nagano
1971	Gerhard Samuel	2005	Oliver Knussen
1972	Michael Zearott	2006	Robert Spano
1973	Michael Tilson Thomas	2007	Pierre-Laurent Aimard
1974	Michael Tilson Thomas	2008	David Robertson
1975	Michael Tilson Thomas	2009	eighth blackbird
1976	Aaron Copland	2010	George Benjamin
1977	Michael Tilson Thomas	2011	Dawn Upshaw
1978	Calvin Simmons	2012	Leif Ove Andsnes
1979	Lukas Foss	2013	Mark Morris
1980	Lukas Foss	2014	Jeremy Denk

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SELECT EXCERPTS FROM THE PRESS

“No arm’s-length tolerance of new music here. Upscale locals, Los Angeles intelligentsia and out-of-towners crowd Libbey Bowl’s near-primitive outdoor facilities for four days and **devour music normal audiences might greet with bewilderment.**”

- *New York Times*

“**an event notable as much for the natural beauty of its Ojai Valley setting, north of Los Angeles, as for its breadth of offerings...**and those who came for the duration of the festival were enriched in a way that selective dips into festivals of greater scope would have difficulty matching.”

- *Financial Times*

“There is nothing dutiful about the approach of either the performers or the audience, but **a truly festive spirit in the way they come together** for this annual long weekend. Few other audiences are as open-minded or curious as those who gather on the benches or lawns of Libbey Bowl in Ojai’s park.

- *Sunday Telegraph*

“The Ojai faithful – **an audience prized for its open minds and congeniality** – proved ever faithful.”

– *Los Angeles Times*

“If the music wafting on this valley’s breezes tells us anything, it’s that **history lives at Ojai.**”

- *Wall Street Journal*

“No walls, no floor, no ceiling, no acoustic paneling. Just grass, trees, birds, bees, and earnest music making ... Ojai isn’t quite a fantasy island in the South Pacific, but its surreal, atmospheric beauty isn’t far removed ... Who would have though that this quiet unassuming city ... would, for one weekend a year, become **a mecca for today’s contemporary music intelligentsia** and maintain a loyal following in the process?”

- *Symphony Magazine*

“Ojai is an anomaly: small but **internationally influential**, primitive yet sophisticated.”

- *New York Times*

“It’s [The Festival] the rubbing-together of the primitive and the sophisticated that lends Ojai its charm. The outdoor setting removes the preciousness from serious musical endeavour without compromising standards, while **its intimacy seals the performer-audience relationship...**”

- *Financial Times*

"... **legendary in new-music circles.** Here in the foothills 85 miles north of Los Angeles, Stravinsky, Copland, Boulez, Messiaen, Lukas Foss, Tilson Thomas, John Adams, Salonen, Mitsuko Uchida, Emanuel Ax, and the Emerson String Quartet have all found a brief musical haven."

- *Gramophone*

"...it's the interaction of extraordinary composers, conductors and performers that gives Ojai its symbiotic essence and makes it **a small but mighty festival.**"

- *Ventura County Star*

"...this extraordinary weekend, **its triumphant proclamation of the mingled roles of music and the human spirit.**"

- *LA Weekly*

"In this case, it was not Vienna, nor Berlin, but the small festival of Ojai that – as far as the interpretation of great symphonic works is concerned – could be seen as **the hub of the musical world.**"

- *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*