

# OJAI MUSIC FESTIVAL

Ojai Music Festival, June 12-15, 2014,  
premieres commissioned opera *The Classical Style*  
with libretto by Music Director Jeremy Denk and  
music by Steven Stucky

Based on the book by Charles Rosen, the comic opera  
collaborators include The Knights, led by conductor Robert Spano

(October 22, 2013 – Ojai, California) – Among the highlights of the 68<sup>th</sup> Ojai Music Festival with Music Director **Jeremy Denk**, June 12-15, 2014, is the anticipated world premiere of a commissioned opera *The Classical Style* based on the eponymous award-winning book by legendary American pianist and scholar **Charles Rosen**. With libretto by newly named MacArthur Fellow Jeremy Denk and music by Pulitzer Prize-winning composer **Steven Stucky**, the comic opera will be premiered at the Ojai Music Festival on June 13, 2014.

Described by Mr. Denk as “at once a love letter to Mozart, Beethoven, and Haydn, and a satire of classical pomp,” the opera cast of eight singers and chamber orchestra will be led by **Robert Spano**, conductor, pianist, composer, pedagogue, and music director of the Atlanta Symphony Orchestra and of the Aspen Music Festival and School. Mr. Spano was music director of the Ojai Music Festival in 2006. **The Knights**, the New York based orchestra collective, will be in residence during the Ojai Music Festival and will serve as chamber orchestra for *The Classical Style*. Singers will be announced at a later date.

Commenting on the opera, Jeremy Denk shared that it is “An opera in which principles of music—harmony, structure—and the big three composers (Haydn, Mozart, Beethoven), as well as several completely unnecessary characters, would find themselves immersed or enmeshed or mired in an opera buffa. Scenes of Charles Rosen, declaiming some of the most eloquent passages from his masterwork, are interspersed with surreal riffs and thought experiments. Although this music is incredibly great, at times we have to acknowledge the often absurd degree to which we’ve subjected it to analysis. The opera buffa genre is simply a way of enjoying this absurdity, turning music inside out to reflect on itself, using one of the iconic masterpieces of analysis as a vehicle.”

Mr. Denk’s “Postscript: Charles Rosen” in *The New Yorker* (December 18, 2012), described Rosen’s *Classical Style*: “The book, against all odds ... occasionally feels like a page-turner, a thriller: these three geniuses—Haydn, Mozart, Beethoven—building on each other’s discoveries, like scientists almost, creating unprecedented inventions, invoking a golden era of form meeting content.”

Steven Stucky commented, “When Tom [Morris] and Jeremy first came to me with this idea, I shrank from the job. It seemed too crazy, too risky, too hard. I kept suggesting other composers to them. But then Jeremy started feeding me bits of the libretto: funny and playful and deep and wistful all at the same time. Pretty soon he, and his ideas, became irresistible. Fortunately, I think we're a good team, egging each other on, relishing the give and take, ready to park our egos and roll up our sleeves. I first read *The Classical Style* as a student. Like so many eager young doctoral candidates (a type who features prominently, and hilariously, in Jeremy's libretto), I thought it changed my life. Many of the insights we discovered there have become common knowledge, so much so that we might forget just how powerful the arrival of that book was.”

*The Classical Style* is the first collaboration between Mr. Denk and Mr. Stucky – and the first opera project for each of them. The opera is co-commissioned by the Ojai Music Festival, Cal Performances in Berkeley, the Aspen Music Festival and School, and Carnegie Hall. The Ojai premiere (June 13, 2014) is supported by a generous grant from the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation.

Ojai enthusiastically welcomes back versatile pianist **Jeremy Denk as the Festival's 2014 Music Director**. Mr. Denk made his Ojai Music Festival debut in 2009 performing Bach's *Goldberg Variations* and Ives' First Sonata, plus numerous chamber music works. With his wide-ranging repertoire, Mr. Denk regularly collaborates with leading orchestras, festivals and soloists, and is an active writer through feature articles in *The New Yorker* and his blog, “Think Denk,” which delves into both musical and extra-musical observations.

### **2014 Overview**

For the 68<sup>th</sup> Ojai Music Festival, Mr. Denk and Artistic Director Thomas W. Morris are shaping a program that fully reflects both the ideals of the Ojai Music Festival and the unique and inventive musical mind of Jeremy Denk. Among Mr. Denk's collaborators is American composer and jazz pianist Uri Caine, who will perform music from his *The Mahler Project*, which was a sensation when released on the recording “Primal Light” in 1998. With music by Beethoven, Janáček, Ives, Ligeti, and Mozart, the Festival will also offer works by Brooklyn-based composers, including Timothy Andres and Andrew Norman. Additional programming information for the 2014 Ojai Music Festival, including concert details, talks, films, and free community events throughout the Ojai Valley campus, will be announced later this fall.

### **Jeremy Denk, Music Director**

One of America's most thought-provoking, multi-faceted, and compelling artists, pianist Jeremy Denk is the recipient of a 2013 MacArthur Fellowship. He has appeared as soloist with many major orchestras, including the Boston, Chicago, San Francisco and London Symphony Orchestras, the Los Angeles Philharmonic, and the Philadelphia Orchestra. He frequently gives recitals in New York, Washington, Boston, Philadelphia, and around the U.S. Mr. Denk is also known for his witty and personal writing; his blog, “Think Denk,” is widely read and enjoyed both within and outside the industry, and he has written pieces for the *New Yorker*, the *New York*

*Times Book Review*, *Newsweek*, the *New Republic*, and the NPR Music website. One of his *New Yorker* contributions, "Every Good Boy Does Fine," will be the basis of a book he is writing for publication by Random House in a couple of years' time. In 2014, he will be Music Director of the Ojai Music Festival, where as well as performing and curating, he is composing the libretto for a comic opera. His debut recording for Nonesuch Records presented music by Ligeti and Beethoven and was included on many "Best of 2012" lists, including those of the *New Yorker*, *Washington Post* and NPR Music; his second recording for the label, released in September 2013, is of Bach's *Goldberg Variations*, a work with which Mr. Denk has had a long and close relationship throughout his career.

### **Steven Stucky, Composer**

Steven Stucky, born in 1949, has an extensive catalogue of compositions ranging from large-scale orchestral works to a cappella miniatures for chorus. He is also active as a conductor, writer, lecturer, and teacher, and for 21 years he enjoyed a close partnership with the Los Angeles Philharmonic: in 1988 André Previn appointed him composer-in-residence of the Los Angeles Philharmonic, and later he became the orchestra's consulting composer for new music, working closely with Esa-Pekka Salonen. Commissioned by the orchestra, his *Second Concerto for Orchestra* brought him the Pulitzer Prize in music in 2005.

Mr. Stucky has taught at Cornell University since 1980 and now serves as Given Foundation Professor of Composition. He has also taught at the Aspen Music Festival and School, the Eastman School of Music, and the University of California (Berkeley). A world-renowned expert on Lutosławski's music, he is a recipient of the Lutosławski Society's medal. He is a frequent guest at colleges and conservatories, and his works appear on the programs of the world's major orchestras.

For addition biographical information on other 2014 Ojai Music Festival artists, please visit [OjaiFestival.org](http://OjaiFestival.org).

### **Thomas W. Morris, Artistic Director**

**Thomas W. Morris** was appointed artistic director of the Ojai Music Festival starting with the 2004 Festival, a relationship that extends through 2017. Mr. Morris is recognized as one of the most innovative leaders in the orchestra industry and served as the long-time chief executive of both The Cleveland Orchestra and the Boston Symphony Orchestra. Mr. Morris is currently active nationally and internationally as a consultant, lecturer, teacher, and writer.

As artistic director of the 68-year-old Ojai Festival, Mr. Morris is responsible for artistic planning, and each year appoints a music director with whom he collaborates on shaping the Festival's programming. During his decade-long tenure, audiences have increased and the scope of the festival has expanded, most recently to include a collaborative partnership with Cal Performances in Berkeley, Ojai North!

Mr. Morris is a founding director of Spring for Music, and serves as the project's artistic director. He currently serves as a member of the Board of Trustees of the Curtis Institute of Music and as

chair of its Board of Overseers, and is a member of the Board of Directors of the Interlochen Center for the Arts. He is also an accomplished percussionist.

### **About the Ojai Music Festival**

From its founding in 1947, the **Ojai Music Festival** has created a place for groundbreaking musical experiences, bringing together innovative artists and curious audiences in an intimate, idyllic setting 80 miles northwest of Los Angeles. The Festival presents broad-ranging programs that embrace the music of our time and provides intellectual context and education around Festival programming, creating an immersion experience of adventurous inspiration and vibrant collaboration. Considered a highlight of the summer classical music season, Ojai has remained a leader in the classical music landscape, provoking thought during the Festival and long after about why music matters.

The Ojai Music Festival attracts the world's greatest musical artists. Through its unique structure of the Artistic Director appointing an annual Music Director, Ojai has presented a "who's who" of music including: Aaron Copland, Igor Stravinsky, Olivier Messiaen, Michael Tilson Thomas, Kent Nagano, Pierre Boulez, John Adams, Esa-Pekka Salonen, Robert Spano, Pierre-Laurent Aimard, David Robertson, eighth blackbird, George Benjamin, Dawn Upshaw, Leif Ove Andsnes, Mark Morris, and Jeremy Denk.

Following the 2014 Festival in Ojai, **Ojai North!** takes place from June 19-21, 2014, in Berkeley, CA. The Ojai Music Festival's multi-year partnership with Cal Performances makes possible annual reprises of Ojai concerts in Berkeley, as well as co-commissions and co-productions. More than a sharing of resources, **Ojai North!** represents a joining of artistic ideals and aspirations. The combined efforts of Ojai's legacy of artistic innovation and Cal Performances' tradition of groundbreaking productions creates a joint force that allows artists to achieve more than could be imagined by each organization separately. For **Ojai North!** information, please visit [www.calperformances.org](http://www.calperformances.org).

### **Experience the 2014 Ojai Music Festival**

The Ojai Music Festival continues to draw thousands of curious and engaged music enthusiasts from across the country and has had record sell-out concerts over the last three years. As 2011 Music Director Dawn Upshaw commented, "There is a very special spirit of collaboration here [Ojai], fostered in part by the gorgeous natural setting and also by the friendly engagement of everyone involved."

As tickets remain in high demand, Ojai now includes virtual opportunities to participate in the Festival experience through live video streaming of concerts and interviews during the four-day event in June. The Festival promotes year-round participation and deeper engagement through its free online courses, OjaiU, which launched last May. Plans for the 2014 OjaiU will be announced at a later date.

**The Ojai Music Festival** encourages engagement with and ownership of the Festival by inviting patrons to invest in what they are passionate about, with opportunities ranging from supporting

major artistic projects to the Festival's community involvement. In return, patrons receive meaningful, experiential benefits related to their giving levels that further strengthen their relationship with the Festival.

**Festival passes are available for the 2014 Festival concerts** and may be purchased online at [OjaiFestival.org](http://OjaiFestival.org) or by calling 805 646 2053. 2014 Ojai Music Festival series passes range from \$110 to \$710 for reserved seating and lawn series passes start from \$55. Single passes will be available in spring 2014.

Directions to Ojai, as well as information about lodging, concierge services for visitors and other Ojai activities, are also available on the [Ojai web site](http://Ojai web site). Follow Festival updates on the web at [OjaiFestival.org](http://OjaiFestival.org), Facebook ([facebook.com/ojaifestival](https://facebook.com/ojaifestival)) and Twitter ([@ojaifestivals](https://twitter.com/ojaifestivals)).

**Invitation to Members of the Press:** For information on press passes and lodging options, please contact Gina Gutierrez at [ggutierrez@ojaifestival.org](mailto:ggutierrez@ojaifestival.org).

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