

OJAI MUSIC FESTIVAL

2016 Music Director Peter Sellars frames programming for 70th Ojai Music Festival June 9-12, 2016

(June 8, 2015 – Ojai, California) – The Ojai Music Festival marks its 70th year in 2016 and to curate this milestone, Artistic Director Thomas W. Morris has invited opera and theater director Peter Sellars to serve as Music Director. For the 2016 Festival, Peter Sellars is shaping a program deeply rooted in the cultures of Ojai, starting new traditions and setting out fresh agendas for the 70 years to come. The Festival will take place June 9-12, 2016.

As the 69th Ojai Music Festival opens this week (June 10-14, 2015) with **Music Director Steven Schick**, the Festival's **2016 Music Director Peter Sellars** shares thoughts on his distinctive approach to programming the Festival:

The Ojai Valley has long been recognized as a rare and beautiful natural site that invites retreat, renewal, and regeneration, from Chumash ceremonial life to Krishnamurti's legendary talks under the trees. The valley has both grandeur and a human scale that inspire and allow the deepest human questions to resonate, and create a setting for the most personal search for answers. The magical play of light across the canyon and the heady aroma of orange blossoms bring the senses to life, awaken the mind, and create a profound aura of openness and well-being.

Music incites many of the same thoughts and emotions, with similar immensity and intimacy and awe. The 70th Ojai Music Festival will gather this powerful energy and spirit of inquiry and reflection into a weekend of peak experiences and secret revelations.

For the first time the composer Kaija Saariaho will come to Ojai. We will feature two of her most potent and visionary works. Her new chamber version of 'The Passion of Simone', a meditation on the life of the courageous French philosopher Simone Weil, written to a wise and humane text by Amin Maalouf, will receive its American premiere with the extraordinary young soprano Julia Bullock. It is a work of startling integrity and permanent challenge in dark times, with a flame of hope that burns brightly and intensely in the darkness.

Kaija Saariaho's newest operatic creation is a sequence of two Japanese Noh plays in English versions by Ezra Pound, entitled 'Only the Sound Remains'. Again Ojai will offer the American premiere. These two plays will be performed in the tradition of Japanese

Takigi Noh in the amphitheater at the Ojai Valley School Upper Campus, lightly held in the gentle grasp of a protective arroyo under a radiant early morning sky for 'The Feather Mantle', a play of illumination, transcendence and evanescence, and just before midnight under an intense starlit sky for 'Always Strong', the harrowing and haunted story of a young warrior's spirit struggling to return to life on earth.

From Tahrir Square in Cairo, Dina El Wedidi and her band come to America to present a new song cycle that paints a personal picture of the realities, aspirations, disappointments, and determination of the Egyptian revolution. Dina El Wedidi epitomizes the new Egyptian women of a rising generation, her gorgeous and unmistakable voice alive with courage, allure, and the breath of freedom. Her band includes traditional Egyptian and modern electronic instruments, and for these performances she will bring three extraordinary older women from the Egyptian zār tradition who are singing in full-throated solidarity with the activism and vision of Dina and her generation.

Julia Bullock will also be the center of a unique and poignant evening honoring the brilliance, daring, public courage, and private tragedies of Josephine Baker, the black icon who created a declaration of independence with her black body, and blazed a trail of irresistible challenge and charm in France in the same years that Simone Weil pursued her feminist vigil on behalf of a larger humanity. Our Ojai evening will be a very personal portrait of a fearless civil rights pioneer and visionary who paid dearly for every forward step. And kept stepping.

The final Sunday of the 2016 festival will shift into an exuberant children's festival for the first part of the day, featuring music written and performed by, with, and for children and anyone who is ready to listen to the world with fresh ears. Those programs will then expand and flow into a huge street party culminating in sheer communal pleasure, the joy of improvisation, increasingly wild juxtapositions, spontaneous jam sessions and very, very good times.

Among the featured artists at the 70th edition of the Ojai Music Festival, we are extremely pleased and proud to welcome, in addition to ICE (International Contemporary Ensemble), Roomful of Teeth, the path breaking vocal collective, participating in the Kaija Saariaho premieres and surprising new works written for and developed by the group. Classical Indian music will be performed in breathtaking settings at specific times of day to reflect the shifting of the light, and films will be screened during those times when we crave the dark. Talks and lectures that illuminate and amplify our current history with cultural and philosophical perspectives will alternate with sessions focused on spiritual thinkers offering quieter moments of contemplation and peace.

The Ojai Valley sunrises and sunsets will do the rest.

-2016 Music Director Peter Sellars

Mr. Morris said, “Peter Sellars, no stranger to Ojai, is a true visionary, and I can think of no better person to lead the Festival’s 70th anniversary. Peter has devised a truly distinctive festival that embraces his vast knowledge and deep commitment to social issues of our time, along with his deep love of Ojai. It will be an audacious experience that includes thrilling music in unusual settings, the greatest of artists, contextual discussions to frame and amplify the music, and provocative films to further enrich our mutual adventure.”

Mr. Sellars is one of the most innovative and powerful forces in the arts, both in America and abroad. His partnership with Ojai dates back to 1992 when he directed a daring version of Stravinsky’s *Histoire du soldat* with that Festival’s Music Director Pierre Boulez. Mr. Sellars returned to Ojai in 2011, with Music Director Dawn Upshaw, to direct the critically acclaimed world premiere of the staged production of George Crumb’s *The Winds of Destiny*.

Peter Sellars, Music Director

Opera, theater, and festival director Peter Sellars has gained international renown for his groundbreaking and transformative interpretations of artistic masterpieces and for his collaborative projects with an extraordinary range of creative artists. Sellars has staged operas at the Glyndebourne Festival, Lyric Opera of Chicago, Netherlands Opera, Opéra National de Paris, Salzburg Festival, and San Francisco Opera, among others, and has established a reputation for bringing 20th-century and contemporary operas to the stage. He has been a driving force in the creation of many new works with longtime collaborator John Adams, including *Nixon in China*, *The Death of Klinghoffer*, *El Niño*, and *Doctor Atomic*.

Mr. Sellars has led several major arts festivals, including the 1990 and 1993 Los Angeles Festivals and the 2002 Adelaide Arts Festival. In 2006 he was Artistic Director of New Crowned Hope, a month-long festival in Vienna for which he invited artists from diverse cultural backgrounds to create new work in the fields of music, theater, dance, film, the visual arts, and architecture for the celebration of Mozart’s 250th birth anniversary.

Mr. Sellars is a professor in the Department of World Arts and Cultures at UCLA and Resident Curator of the Telluride Film Festival. He is the recipient of a MacArthur Fellowship, the Erasmus Prize, and the Gish Prize, and is a member of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences. In 2014 he was awarded the prestigious Polar Music Prize and named Artist of the Year by Musical America.

Thomas W. Morris, Artistic Director

Thomas W. Morris was appointed Artistic Director of the Ojai Music Festival starting with the 2004 Festival and will provide artistic direction through the 75th Festival in 2021. 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. He is currently active nationally and internationally as a consultant, lecturer, teacher, and writer.

As Artistic Director of the 69-year-old 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, Ojai at Berkeley, with Cal Performances at UC Berkeley.

Mr. Morris was a founding director of Spring for Music at New York's Carnegie Hall and served as the project's artistic director. He currently serves as 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 in unusual ways with an eclectic mix of rarely performed music, refreshing juxtapositions of musical styles, and music by today's composers. The four-day festival is a complete immersive experience with concerts, free community events, symposia, film screenings, and gatherings. Considered a highlight of the summer season, Ojai has remained a leader in the classical music landscape.

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, Jeremy Denk, and Steven Schick.

The Festival recently announced artists who will serve as Music Directors in the coming years: Peter Sellars (June 9-12, 2016), Vijay Iyer (June 8-11, 2017), and Esa-Pekka Salonen (June 7-10, 2018).

Ojai at Berkeley

Following the 2015 Festival in Ojai, Ojai at Berkeley takes place from June 18 to 20 in Berkeley, CA. Inaugurated in 2011, Ojai at Berkeley is the Ojai Music Festival's multi-year partnership with Cal Performances. This collaborative effort makes possible annual reprises of Ojai concerts in Berkeley, as well as co-commissions and co-productions. More than just a sharing of resources, Ojai at Berkeley represents a joining of artistic ideals and aspirations. Ojai at Berkeley 2016 is scheduled for June 16 to June 18.

Remote Access to the 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 in recent years. As tickets remain

in high demand, Ojai now includes free digital access to the Festival experience through live video streaming of concerts at www.Ojaifestival.org; at the Festival's MOOC OjaiU at www.OjaiU.org; on the radio at APM's *Performance Today* at www.performancetoday.publicradio.org; and via its new media partnership with WQXR's Q2 at www.q2music.org/ojai. Visit www.OjaiFestival.org for more details.

Series Passes for the 2016 Ojai Music Festival

Advance 2016 series subscriptions will be available during the Festival weekend and online immediately after the Festival.

Single Tickets for 2015 Ojai Music Festival

2015 Ojai Music Festival single tickets are now on sale online at OjaiFestival.org or by calling (805) 646-2053. Tickets start at \$40 for reserved seating, lawn tickets at \$15, and \$45 for Ojai Talks.

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

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