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# **OJAIMUSICFESTIVAL**

## **CHAIRMAN OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS DAVID J. NYGREN ANNOUNCES THE APPOINTMENT OF JAMIE BENNETT AS PRESIDENT AND WELCOMES NEW BOARD MEMBERS**

(OJAI, CA) – David J. Nygren, Chairman of the Board of Directors of the Ojai Music Festival, is pleased to announce the appointment of Jamie Bennett as President beginning October 19. A distinguished executive, Bennett brings to Ojai vast and proven strategic planning, fundraising and financial management acumen. As the Festival marks its 70th anniversary, Bennett will serve alongside Artistic Director Thomas W. Morris as the organization looks toward the future and begins a strategic planning process.

“On behalf of my Board colleagues and the entire Festival family, I am absolutely thrilled to welcome our Ojai neighbor and recognized executive, Jamie Bennett, to the Festival’s administrative helm,” said Nygren. “After serving on the Festival board since April and gaining insight into the Festival’s current opportunities, Jamie expressed his interest in becoming more deeply engaged with the organization. As Jamie and I began to explore ways to harness his leadership, fundraising and financial expertise, the concept of engaging him as President with a portfolio that would utilize his strengths emerged. Following a rigorous interview process by the Festival Board, the decision to hire Jamie was unanimous. Jamie will join an extraordinary and dedicated staff, which has been led by COO Gina Gutierrez. Alongside Tom Morris—our unparalleled visionary and spirited artistic heart—Jamie will help guide our planning for the future. I am deeply appreciative and humbled by the extraordinary talents, generous support and unwavering commitment of our Board, and I extend the warmest welcome to our newest Board members Frederick Fisher and Barry Sanders.”

In his role as President, Bennett will focus on governance, fundraising, strategic planning, and community outreach. COO Gina Gutierrez's portfolio will continue to include administrative and operational responsibilities, plus those of communications and marketing.

“I am thrilled to be joining Tom, David and the wonderful staff. The Festival is a real gem—one of the world's most important annual music institutions for contemporary, experimental and classical music,” shared Bennett. “For the past four years my wife and I have been part-time residents of Upper Ojai, and we are both looking forward to living in Ojai full time. From what I've seen since attending the Festival, there is an openness, spirit of adventure and palpable collaboration among artists, audiences and those who directly support it in the community, on the board, through generous gifts of time and money, and through investments of talent. This dedication to and belief in the very essence of what the Festival is all about is what has made the last 70 years possible, and it will—without a doubt—be what secures the Festival's future. I could not be more excited and honored to be invited to journey with the Festival as President.”

### **Jamie Bennett**

Jamie Bennett has been the Chief Operating Officer of Southern California Institute of Architecture (SCI-Arc) in Los Angeles for the past six years where he was responsible for planning, operations, finance, campus, student and administrative functions. He's credited with the school's current financial health and the purchase of the Los Angeles campus by raising a bond issue to finance the acquisition.

Before joining SCI-Arc, Bennett worked extensively in nonprofits and as an executive in media companies in Los Angeles and London. Most recently he has been a business advisor, investor and Director with the Pasadena Angels, which specializes in local emerging growth companies.

He served as CEO of worldwide productions for London-based Pearson Television, as CEO of L.A.-based ACI television and as a senior vice-president at Disney's Buena Vista TV Productions in Burbank. Prior to working for the Disney Company, Bennett worked for CBS, including five years as General Manager of KCBS-TV in Los Angeles.

Bennett holds an MBA from Harvard University and a BA in Political Science from the University of California, Berkeley. He has served on the Public Television Advisory Board at the Annenberg School at USC and on the boards of the National Environmental Trust in Washington, D.C., Northfield Mount Hermon School in Massachusetts, St. Nicholas Theatre in

Chicago and Marlborough School in Los Angeles, among others.

He and his wife Carolyn Bennett have three grown children and make their home in Upper Ojai and Los Angeles.

### **Ojai Music Festival Board of Directors**

The Festival welcomes two new Board members, Frederick Fisher and Barry A. Sanders, to its roster of distinguished leaders. Fisher has more than 30 years' experience as a practicing architect, building seminal academic institutions, museums and contemporary residential projects throughout the United States, Europe and Asia. He received his Bachelor of Arts degree from Oberlin College and Master of Architecture degree from UCLA. He chaired the Environmental Design Department at Otis College of Art & Design and has taught at Harvard, Columbia, USC, UCLA and SCI-Arc. Fisher currently splits his time living in Ojai with his family and Los Angeles. Barry A. Sanders, author of the recently released book, *American Avatar: the United States in the Global Imagination*, is an adjunct professor in the Communications Studies Department at UCLA. He served as past Chairman of the Board and President of the Los Angeles Philharmonic and Chairman of the Los Angeles Public Library Foundation, and he is presently on the executive committee of the Board of Directors of the Los Angeles Opera.

Since David Nygren's tenure as Chairman of the Festival Board of Directors began in 2013, the organization has grown with five additional new board members: Sandy Buechley, business intelligence manager at Patagonia, Inc. (Ojai); James P. Drummy, principal at the law firm of Poindexter & Doutré Inc. (Los Angeles); Carol Nygren, principal at The Nygren Group (Valencia); Dr. Bridget Tsao-Brockman, optometrist and owner of Topa Topa Optometry (Ojai); and Gary Wasserman, CEO of Allied Metals Corporation (Detroit, MI). Board members who continue their dedicated service to the Festival include: Sue Bienkowski, program director (retired) of St. Jude Medical Center (Santa Monica); NancyBell Coe, president (retired) of Music Academy of the West (Santa Barbara); Michael Gorfaine, partner and co-owner, Gorfaine/Schwartz Agency (Los Angeles); Jon Hogen, financial advisor (Pasadena); Russ Irwin, toxicologist (retired) at Bayer Group (Bay Area); Cathryn Krause, co-founder (retired) of BST Solutions (Ojai); Scott Reed, president of Music Academy of the West (Santa Barbara); Arthur Rieman, managing attorney at the Law Firm for Nonprofits (Los Angeles); Dr. Barry Schifrin, OBGYN (retired) (Los Angeles); Greg Smith, Land Management, Smith-Hobson LLC (Ventura); and Jane Weirick, teacher (retired) (Ojai), as well as President of the Ojai Festivals Women's

Committee Merrill Williams, director of public relations of the Ojai Valley Inn & Spa (retired) (Ojai).

### **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 works by today's composers. The four-day festival is a complete, immersive experience with concerts, free community events, symposia, and social 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 Ojai Music Festival marks its 70th year, June 9-12, 2016, and to curate this milestone, Artistic Director Thomas W. Morris has invited acclaimed opera and theater director Peter Sellars to serve as Music Director. Highlights will include award-winning Finnish composer Kaija Saariaho's new chamber version of *La Passion de Simone*, a meditation on the life of the courageous French philosopher Simone Weil; the world premiere of a personal musical portrait of American-born French dancer, singer, and actress Josephine Baker; and the Ojai debut of Egyptian singer Dina El Wedidi, who epitomizes a rising generation of Egyptian women. Joining Sellars in Ojai will be ICE (International Chamber Ensemble), the Calder Quartet, Roomful of Teeth, and soprano Julia Bullock. The complete Festival schedule will be announced this fall. For further details, visit [OjaiFestival.org](http://OjaiFestival.org).

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