

OJAI MUSIC FESTIVAL

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.

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- 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*.

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- 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; The Cleveland Orchestra with Music Director Franz Welser-Most; British composer Jonathan Cole’s

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Testament is given its world premiere and is a joint commission by the Sue Knussen Commissioning Fund, London Sinfonietta and the Ojai Festival.

- 2006 The 60th Anniversary of the Ojai Music Festival is led by Robert Spano as Music Director in his Ojai debut; featured composer is Osvaldo Golijov; Golijov's revised concert version of *Ainadamar* is given its West Coast premiere; featured artists include Atlanta Symphony Orchestra and Chamber Chorus and Dawn Upshaw.
- 2007 French pianist, Pierre Laurent Aimard, makes his Festival debut as music director along with Hungarian composer/conductor Peter Eotvos as featured composer. The Festival program includes two U.S. premieres by Eotvos – *Sonata per Sei* and *Chinese Opera*.
- 2008 American conductor David Robertson marks his first Festival as music director. American composer Steve Reich returns after a 35-year absence with his music at the centerpiece of the Festival. Dawn Upshaw returns for her third visit to Ojai. French composer Francois Narboni enjoys the U.S. premiere of his work entitled *El Gran Masturbador* and Michael Jarrell's *Cassandre* makes its west coast premiere.
- 2009 eighth blackbird becomes the second chamber ensemble to be named music director. The co-commissioned piece, *Slide*, makes its world premiere.
- 2010 Former student of Messiaen, British composer/conductor George Benjamin makes his Ojai debut as music director and brings the preeminent Ensemble Modern to Ojai. Friday pays tribute to the composer Frank Zappa with a symposium session that includes Gail Zappa and evening concert pairing Zappa and works of Varese performed by EM.
- 2011 Dawn Upshaw returns for her fourth appearance as music director celebrating the opening of the new Libbey Bowl. World premieres include the staged production of George Crumb's *The Winds of Destiny* directed by Peter Sellars and composer Maria Schneider's *Winter Morning Walks* performed by Upshaw. The Festival launches Ojai North! which brings three Ojai concerts to Cal Performances at UC Berkeley.
- 2012 The Festival presented the West Coast premiere of John Luther Adams' *Inuksuit* at Libbey Park performed by 48 musicians and the American premiere of Bent Soresen's Piano Concerto No. 2, "La Mattina," performed by Music Director Leif Ove Andsnes
- 2013 The Festival welcomes Mark Morris – its first choreographer to serve as Music Director – and features the world premiere of his *Jenn and Spencer*.
- 2014 Jeremy Denk returns to the Festival to serve as Music Director. The program includes the world premiere of a commissioned opera, *The Classical Style*, based on the eponymous work by Charles Rosen. The opera features libretto written Denk and music by Steven Stucky.

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