



OJAI MUSIC FESTIVAL 0611-142020*



Virtual Edition
in honor of the 74th Festival



Welcome to the **OJAI MUSIC FESTIVAL 0611-142020**

*
Virtual Edition
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To mark the 74th Festival and honor its spirit, we bring to you this keepsake program book as our thanks for your steadfast support, a gift from the Ojai Music Festival Board of Directors.

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Cover art: Mimi Archie

A Message from the Chairman of the Board

Welcome to the 74th Ojai Music Festival, virtual edition. Never could we have predicted how altered this moment would be for each and every one of us. Throughout this time and going forward, our wish is for you and your loved ones to be safe and well.

Much has changed from the course that was set for our annual gathering in Ojai. What remains an absolute today, as it has throughout this remarkable organization's history, is the very spirit of the Festival, which is realized each June through boundless creativity and genuine collaboration. All who comprise our family give breath to this spirit, including our many artistic partners from across the globe and our singular audiences, who are renowned for their bold curiosity and insatiable appetites for adventure.

The unfettered inventiveness and passion with which our 2020 Music Director Matthias Pintscher and Chad Smith, who led our artistic direction this year, assembled artistic collaborators, programmed concerts and planned the many intimate moments which are integral to the fabric of each Festival, would have offered all of us an experience to remember. This week, we would have celebrated Mr. Pintscher as composer, conductor and collaborator, diving deep into his commitment to strengthen the interactions and connections between the music of today and seminal works from across the centuries. We would have met his extraordinary Ensemble intercontemporain (EIC), founded by seven-time Ojai Music Director Pierre Boulez. Their arrival in Ojai would have been a powerful connection to Ojai's storied past. Alongside works by Mr. Pintscher, Boulez's provocative and riveting music was to be a featured thread across the Festival, as well as the music of Olga Neuwirth, one the most brilliant composers of our time. In addition, we would have welcomed the return of the Calder Quartet, plus the Ojai debuts of mezzo-soprano Tamara Mumford, tenor Andrew Staples, vocalist Della Miles, and the LA Phil New Music Group. We would have heard US and world premieres, and we would have concluded with a free concert for the community featuring Steve Reich performing in his iconic *Drumming*. It would have been a remarkable four days together!

What we offer you now, with this limited edition program book and with curated online offerings, is in no way intended to be a substitute for what we would have experienced together in the beautiful oasis that is Ojai. This keepsake includes program notes by Thomas May to enhance the Festival's planned events, which can be found at OjaiFestival.org beginning June 11. We invite you to enjoy insightful conversations with some of our 2020 principals, hosted by Ara Guzelimian. You'll also find

VISION STATEMENT

Transcendent and immersive musical experiences that spark joy, challenge the mind, and ignite the spirit.

MISSION STATEMENT

Enable artists and inquisitive audiences to engage with one another around adventurous programming in the intimate setting of Ojai and reach out beyond the Festival and the Ojai community throughout the year to connect with broader audiences.

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daily playlists that highlight the 2020 repertoire. Our hope is, in this very modest way, to honor the spirit of the 74th Ojai Music Festival, to pay tribute to those who imagined what might have been, and to thank you for being unwavering champions of this very special Festival.

There is simply no way to thank Matthias Pintscher and Chad Smith – and our 2020 Festival artists and production team – for planning an experience that would surely have transported and transformed us. CEO Jamie Bennett and our dedicated administrative team responded to the challenge we faced due to the worldwide pandemic. With warmth and compassion, Jamie and his team led us through this unprecedented moment, and I am grateful. We would have been richer for the time spent together in this enchanted place, immersed in the magic that we know to be the Ojai Music Festival. Even as we are called to connect virtually this week, the very spirit of this Festival will carry us forward.

On behalf of my Board colleagues, we thank all of you for your steadfast support. While we certainly hope to see you much sooner, we anticipate our reunion in Ojai in 2021 as we begin our 75th anniversary celebration. The Festival's future with Artistic Director Ara Guzelimian begins in partnership with Ojai's next music directors: composer/conductor John Adams as Music Director for the 75th Festival (June 10 to 13, 2021) and AMOC (American Modern Opera Company) as Music Director for the 76th Festival (June 9 to 12, 2022). Mark your calendars!

Warmest wishes,

Jerrold Eberhardt
Chairman of the Board



Virtual Festival Schedule

Join Ojai Talks host and Artistic Director designate Ara Guzelimian for virtual offerings that will feature insightful conversations with special guests, interspersed with video and music excerpts. Following each 30-minute segment, watch selected archived concerts for your enjoyment.

THURSDAY, JUNE 11 | 7pm

Conversation with Matthias Pintscher

Musical excerpts of Ensemble intercontemporain's performance of Pierre Boulez's *sur Incises* and Matthias Pintscher's *Bereshit*.

FRIDAY, JUNE 12 | 7pm

Conversation with Matthias Pintscher and Olga Neuwirth

Musical excerpts of Ensemble intercontemporain's performance of Olga Neuwirth's *Le Encantadas* and *Eleanor*.

SATURDAY, JUNE 13 | 7pm

Conversation with the Calder Quartet

With musical excerpts of a Calder Quartet performance.

SUNDAY, JUNE 14 | 7pm

Conversation with Steve Reich

Musical excerpts of Steve Reich's *Tehillim* and *Drumming*.

Special thanks to DEFINITE Production and Square Production companies.



ARA GUZELIMIAN
Artistic Director designate



MATTHIAS PINTSCHER
Music Director



OLGA NEUWIRTH



CALDER QUARTET



STEVE REICH



How to Watch

Join us every evening at www.OjaiFestival.org @ 7pm Pacific Time.

Add to Your Virtual Experience

We know that the Ojai experience is always more than just concerts. Visit our website for a touch of Ojai!

- **Ojai Photo Gallery** with recent photos provided by the talents of local Ojai photographers
- **Recipes** from a few of our Ojai restaurants to try at home
- **74th Festival playlists** to enjoy before or after our virtual Festival
- **74th Festival artist profiles** to learn more about our artists
- **Festival alum video** introductions from our *Tune in Tuesdays*



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Matthias Pintscher, Music Director

Matthias Pintscher is the Music Director of the Ensemble intercontemporain, one of the world's leading contemporary music ensembles founded by Pierre Boulez in 1976. Known equally as one of today's foremost composers, Mr. Pintscher conducted the premiere of his new work for baritone, chorus, and orchestra, performed by Georg Nigl and the Chorus and Symphonieorchester des Bayerischen Rundfunks at their Musica Viva festival in February 2020.

With the Ensemble intercontemporain (EIC) in 2019/20, Mr. Pintscher premiered new works by Beat Furrer, Pierre-Yves Macé, Johannes Boris Borowski, Clara Iannotta, and others. Other projects include bringing the large-scale audiovisual work *From Within*, created by Marco Nikodijevic and Robert Henke and premiered by the EIC in June 2018, to the BOZAR in Brussels.

In the 2019/20 season, Mr. Pintscher made debuts with the symphony orchestras of Montréal, Baltimore, Houston, Pittsburgh, and the Detroit Symphony Orchestra when they returned to Interlochen for the first time since 2006. He also made his debut at the Vienna State Opera conducting the premiere of Olga Neuwirth's new opera *Orlando*, and returned to the Staatsoper Unter den Linden in Berlin to conduct performances of Beat Furrer's *Violetter Schnee*, which he premiered in January 2019. Re-invitations this season include the Cleveland Orchestra, Orchestre de la Suisse Romande, and Chamber Orchestra of Europe.

Highlights of Mr. Pintscher's 2018/19 season included serving as the season creative chair for the Tonhalle-Orchester Zürich, the artist-in-residence at the Los Angeles Chamber Orchestra, and finishing a nine-year term as the BBC Scottish Symphony Orchestra's artist-in-association. Last season, he made his debuts with the Saint Louis Symphony Orchestra, Rotterdam Philharmonic, and the Staatsoper Unter den Linden in Berlin, and returned to the symphony orchestras of Chicago, Cincinnati, Cleveland, Indianapolis, Milwaukee, the New York Philharmonic, and the New World Symphony in Miami. In Europe, he conducted the Scottish Chamber Orchestra at the Edinburgh International Festival and returned to the Orchestre de Paris, Danish National Symphony Orchestra, and Helsinki Philharmonic. An enthusiastic supporter of and mentor to students and young musicians, Mr. Pintscher served as principal conductor of the Lucerne Festival Academy Orchestra from 2016-2018 and worked with the Karajan Academy of the Berlin Philharmonic in their 2017/18 season, culminating in a concert at the Philharmonie.

Matthias Pintscher began his musical training in conducting, studying with Peter Eötvös in his early 20s, during which time composing soon took a more prominent role in his life. He rapidly gained critical acclaim in both areas of activity, and continues to compose in addition to his conducting career. As a composer, his music is championed by some of today's finest performing artists, orchestras, and conductors. His works have been performed by such orchestras as the Chicago Symphony, Cleveland Orchestra, New York Philharmonic, Philadelphia Orchestra, Berlin Philharmonic, London Symphony Orchestra, and the Orchestre de Paris, among others. Bärenreiter is his exclusive publisher, and recordings of his compositions can be found on Kairos, EMI, Teldec, Wergo, and Winter & Winter. Mr. Pintscher has been on the composition faculty of the Juilliard School since 2014.

OJAI MUSIC FESTIVAL MUSIC DIRECTORS

1947	THOR JOHNSON	1983	DANIEL LEWIS
1948	THOR JOHNSON	1984	PIERRE BOULEZ
	EDWARD REBNER	1985	KENT NAGANO
1949	THOR JOHNSON	1986	KENT NAGANO
1950	THOR JOHNSON		STEPHEN MOSKO
1951	WILLIAM STEINBERG	1987	LUKAS FOSS
1952	THOR JOHNSON	1988	NICHOLAS MCGEGAN
1953	THOR JOHNSON		SIR PETER MAXWELL DAVIES
1954	ROBERT CRAFT		DIANE WITTRY
1955	ROBERT CRAFT	1989	PIERRE BOULEZ
	IGOR STRAVINSKY	1990	STEPHEN MOSKO
1956	ROBERT CRAFT	1991	JOHN HARBISON
	IGOR STRAVINSKY		SIR PETER MAXWELL DAVIES
1957	AARON COPLAND,	1992	PIERRE BOULEZ
	INGOLF DAHL	1993	JOHN ADAMS
1958	AARON COPLAND	1994	MICHAEL TILSON THOMAS
1959	ROBERT CRAFT	1995	KENT NAGANO
1960	HENRI TEMIANKA	1996	PIERRE BOULEZ
1961	LUKAS FOSS	1997	EMANUEL AX, DANIEL HARDING
1962	LUKAS FOSS	1998	MITSUKO UCHIDA
1963	LUKAS FOSS		DAVID ZINMAN
1964	INGOLF DAHL	1999	ESA-PEKKA SALONEN
1965	INGOLF DAHL	2000	SIR SIMON RATTLE
1966	INGOLF DAHL	2001	ESA-PEKKA SALONEN
1967	PIERRE BOULEZ	2002	EMERSON STRING QUARTET
1968	ROBERT LAMARCHINA	2003	PIERRE BOULEZ
	LAWRENCE FOSTER	2004	KENT NAGANO
	MICHAEL TILSON THOMAS	2005	OLIVER KNUSSEN
1969	MICHAEL ZEAROTT	2006	ROBERT SPANO
	STEFAN MINDE	2007	PIERRE-LAURENT AIMARD
	MICHAEL TILSON THOMAS	2008	DAVID ROBERTSON
1970	PIERRE BOULEZ	2009	EIGHTH BLACKBIRD
1971	GERHARD SAMUEL	2010	GEORGE BENJAMIN
1972	MICHAEL ZEAROTT	2011	DAWN UPSHAW
1973	MICHAEL TILSON THOMAS	2012	LEIF OVE ANDSNES
1974	MICHAEL TILSON THOMAS	2013	MARK MORRIS
1975	MICHAEL TILSON THOMAS	2014	JEREMY DENK
1976	AARON COPLAND	2015	STEVEN SCHICK
1977	MICHAEL TILSON THOMAS	2016	PETER SELLARS
1978	CALVIN SIMMONS	2017	VIJAY IYER
1979	LUKAS FOSS	2018	PATRICIA KOPATCHINSKAJA
1980	LUKAS FOSS	2019	BARBARA HANNIGAN
1981	DANIEL LEWIS	2020	MATTHIAS PINTSCHER
1982	ROBERT CRAFT		

The Art of Transitions

How do we listen to music now? That question might at first prompt a quick checklist of our tech gear — the tools of mechanical reproduction and propagation that have become ever more refined over the 143 years since Thomas Edison first introduced the wax cylinder. But several months into the coronavirus pandemic — with our experience of live performances at best limited to streaming — many of us have been forced to rethink our relationship to music itself.

How we listen now comes with a fresh awareness of the fragility, the vulnerability of this art — the very traits that make it so transformative. For music exists most fully as a live, present-tense exchange among what Benjamin Britten famously termed the “Holy Trinity” of audience, performer, and composer. Music is an art of transitions. It travels between these vertices in unrepeatable ways, tracing interactive pathways that are unique to each performance. And, in the process, music moves from the material to the immaterial. By definition bound to time, it exists through ephemeral sounds that reverberate in a specific space. Yet music simultaneously occupies a realm, inscribed in memory, that defies time and physical distance.

All of these topics come into play in the program that Matthias Pintscher planned for the 2020 Ojai Festival. Against the backdrop of the current crisis, his vision has an added resonance that is uncanny, since Pintscher’s core approach to music is to shake away facile assumptions, inviting the audience to question again the very basis of how they listen, and to listen with heightened awareness — to intriguing discoveries from contemporary composers and familiar repertoire alike. The metaphor of a landscape appears frequently in his discussions of music:

“Landscapes are mostly diverse. Landscapes hold surprises and are deeply human in the end. Music somehow has the same vulnerability and sensitivity as a landscape. You have to care deeply when you put together a program or cultivate a landscape. These are all works that have been part of my life for a long time. As music director, you bring works and flavors and personalities that people have never heard of, and you present pieces they know in a new light.”

Landscapes, like music, are also about transitions. Various kinds of transitions emerge from the underlying threads that link

Pintscher’s intricately designed sequence of programs. Take the transition from his own mentor, Pierre Boulez, to himself and other peers who have navigated paths unforeseen by the postwar Modernists. Pintscher stands as a prime exemplar of these, combining formidable gifts as a composer, conductor, curator, and teacher. A self-described wanderer who was led by curiosity to leave his native Germany as a teenager and who lived in England and Israel in his 20s, Pintscher now divides his time, when not on the road, between Paris and Manhattan. His compositions often explore the transition from indistinct noise to the most refined timbral combinations. They draw on his love of visual art, poetry, and theater, transitioning among these different artistic media without betraying music’s inherent self-referentiality. The 2020 program encompasses a de facto retrospective of Pintscher’s instrumental writing, from an early string quartet that responds to Gesualdo’s late-Renaissance spiritual strife to his recent piano concerto *Nur* (the Hebrew word for *fire*), in which impulses from today’s young American avant-garde are discernible.

As a conductor educated in the fine details of Boulezian aesthetics, Pintscher fondly recalls the first score he studied with the Frenchman Debussy’s exquisite late ballet *Jeux*. Boulez’s simultaneous command of surface and structure, detail and design, “informed my insight into sound production, into what it means to tackle a style to conduct an orchestra.” Boulez himself proved to be a master of the “art of transition” in the sense in which Wagner used the phrase: with reference to *Tristan und Isolde*, where he described his ability to shift gradually from one extreme state to another as perhaps his “finest and deepest art.”

Pintscher ascribes Boulez’s outlook to a “consciousness of detail” that he associates with French culture (and with cooking, another passion). But this also coexists for Pintscher with a love of surprises, with unexpected juxtapositions. Olga Neuwirth’s music could hardly be more different, yet Pintscher, who has long felt a close rapport with his Austrian peer, is one of her most steadfast champions. He recently conducted the world premiere of her Virginia Woolf–inspired opera *Orlando* — the first opera commissioned from a female composer by the storied Vienna Staatsoper. The moment he began thinking up his ideal programming choices for Ojai, Pintscher says, he knew he wanted to spotlight Neuwirth. Before the pandemic, the plan was for him

to conduct the U.S. premiere of *Le encantadas*, her immersive response to Herman Melville, in Los Angeles — a prelude to set the stage for the Ojai Festival.

A fiercely original and independent musical thinker, Neuwirth is well represented here in works that respond, variously, to Billie Holiday, the ascetic outsider artist Henry Darger, and J.S. Bach. She relishes theatrically animated hybrids of style, genre, and mood, always showing an urge to reinvent herself and her inspirations. As a young student, Neuwirth spent formative years in San Francisco and developed an abiding fascination with American culture — especially its subversive trends in film and music. Yet she is also a “deeply Austrian” artist Pintscher notes, sharing the obsessions of Schubert and Alban Berg and rebellious in her critiques of philistine conformity by her fellow Austrians. For this she was often marginalized early in her career, when Boulez became one of the few in power to offer his support.

What was intended as the long-overdue Ojai debut of the Ensemble intercontemporain (EIC) further underscores the complexity of the Boulezian-Pintscher lineage and brings to mind key moments of transition in Ojai’s history as well. As the embodiment of Boulezian values in practice today, EIC would have given the 2020 Festival a striking historical footprint — even though the ensemble had never previously appeared here. Starting in 1967, Boulez served as music director for seven summers at various points in the Festival’s history up to 2003.

Boulez’s repeated attraction to this special place — over a period spanning some 36 years — is a remarkable phenomenon, according to Chad Smith, artistic director of the 2020 edition. “Southern California might seem an unlikely place for a Parisian intellectual who brought such a sense of rigorousness to music.” Yet Ojai provided a kind of freedom to breathe that the French master lacked elsewhere. Ojai, a place of natural perfection that conjures paradise for so many, beckoned to Boulez with his own concepts of musical perfectibility, as Smith points out. It was here that he could make an attempt at “perfecting paradise.” In this sense, Pintscher’s Ojai programs posit another transition — an invisible bridge — between concepts of new music in Europe and in the U.S., from the linearity of discarded notions of “progress” to the riotous, chaotic crazy quilt of diverse possibilities that are a young composer’s to choose from today. The chance to encounter *sur Incises*, arguably the French master’s most satisfying composition, in the beautiful setting of the Bowl

promised to spark a very different understanding of this music, its dazzlingly planned intricacies of texture coming closer to the complex freedoms of jazz — or of the skeins of melody Steve Reich liberates from amplified voices and tuned percussion in *Tehillim*. The presence of Reich and other American composers, incidentally, helps to right a notable shortcoming of Boulez’s Ojai programming, which notoriously skipped over the work being done by Americans in those years, particularly those animated by the energy of Minimalism.

The Reich title is one of several Hebrew words that pop up in Pintscher’s programs, beginning with *The Beginning* — *Bereshit*, the name of Pintscher’s fascinating meditation inspired by the first word of *Genesis* — and continuing with an entire program built around the biblical Creation story, including a new Ojai commission from Toshio Hosokawa treating the Flood, which sets the whole process back in motion again. Pintscher’s own catalogue is replete with Hebrew titles. Those chosen for the Festival programs in turn suggest a thread of spirituality — in counterpoint to Boulez’s resolutely materialist secularism — that subtly emerges alongside references to J.S. Bach’s divinely inspired quest for compositional perfection, Martin Luther King Jr.’s Gospel-based calls for justice (Olga Neuwirth), and American Transcendentalism (Charles Ives). Steve Reich’s *Tehillim* itself implicitly asserts the ancient link between words and music as an organized ritual of praise.

As an art of transitions, music is blessed/condemned to be an art of transience: the notes, colors, combinations which it comprises are destined to fade into nonexistence. Like immortality, music that did not die would rob us of any sense of meaning. This is the paradox Mahler, another traveler between worlds (Old and New, Jewish and Christian, composer and performer) explores so movingly in his late *Das Lied von der Erde*. The longing for eternity, given voice in the final, longest movement, is at its most acute in a scene of leave-taking.

—THOMAS MAY

Thomas May is a freelance writer, critic, educator, and translator. He has written for *The New York Times* and regularly contributes to the program books of the Lucerne Festival, Metropolitan Opera, and Juilliard School. His books include *Decoding Wagner* and *The John Adams Reader*.

Thursday, June 11, 2020 | 7:30pm

Libbey Bowl

UNSUKE CHIN

Gougalōn: Scenes from a Street Theater, for ensemble

Ensemble intercontemporain (EIC)
Matthias Pintscher *conductor*

MATTHIAS PINTSCHER

bereshit

EIC
Matthias Pintscher *conductor*

OLGA NEUWIRTH

Eleanor, for blues singer, battery, electric guitar, and ensemble

EIC
Matthias Pintscher *conductor*
Lucas Niggli *percussion*
Della Miles *vocalist*

Festival artists' bios and music playlists available at OjaiFestival.org

UnsuK Chin (b. 1961)

Gougalōn: Scenes from a Street Theater (2008-09; rev. 2011)

Matthias Pintscher (b. 1971)

bereshit (2012)

Olga Neuwirth (b. 1968)

Eleanor (2014-15)

In Search of Beginning

"A beginning, middle, and end" — these are the essentials, and in that order, for a narrative to convey a satisfying sense of completion, according to Aristotle. He was referring specifically to the genre of tragedy, but the formula remains paradigmatic for the classical structures of music — even for the stories we tell to make sense of our own experiences. Try to reach for the moment of beginning, however, and it slips away, elusive as the reflection of Narcissus. The artist not merely knows but cherishes the yearning behind that search, the desire to transform how it all began into how it might begin anew.

Sometimes personal memory can catalyze this quest. UnsuK Chin refers to "a Proustian moment" that occurred without warning when she visited China for the first time in 2008 and 2009. The lively food vendors and street markets of the old neighborhoods of Hong Kong and Guangzhou, inhabited by the poor but juxtaposed close up against the glittering showcases of modern urban life, triggered memories of "long-forgotten childhood experiences" in her native Seoul of the 1960s, she writes — "a period characterized by poverty and military dictatorship," before the modernization that first comes to mind for many Westerners today.

The title *Gougalōn* comes from Old High German, not Korean — Chin relocated in her 20s to Germany, where she studied with György Ligeti — and refers to traveling jesters or jugglers who entertained at folk festivals. Much like the composition it names, the word at once operates on multiple, ambiguous — even contradictory — layers of meaning. *Gougalōn* performers offered welcome entertainment but were also fortune-tellers and con artists who pretended to ply magic. According to the scholar Habakuk Traber, their work encompassed "an eccentric range of gestures and comic movements, but also all manner of wizardry, from awe to mumbo-jumbo," exhibiting an "ambivalent, dual nature between liberation and deception..." [see sidebar on p. 10].

In *Gougalōn*, subtitled "Scenes from a Street Theater," Chin is not interested in programmatically reproducing or illustrating these memories. Moreover, she did not set out to write a piece "'about' Korea or 'about' a certain era" and doubts whether music "is able to express anything other than itself." Rather, the memories "merely provide a framework" for "an 'imaginary folk music' that is stylized, broken within itself, and only seemingly primitive."

The blank page holds terror — and endless possibility. For there is no single right beginning, but as many beginnings as can be imagined. Matthias Pintscher dramatizes the act of creation by boldly linking it with the myth of cosmogony with which the Bible begins. *bereshit*, the very first word of the Hebrew Torah (and of what is more widely known as the Book of Genesis), reminds us of how slippery our putatively fixed points of origin actually are.

That the first word of divine revelation should begin not with *aleph* but with the second letter of the alphabet is a matter of much discussion in Jewish teaching, as is the inaccuracy of the familiar translation "in the beginning" (there is no definite article in the construction *bereshit*). Properly, the phrase means "in **a** beginning." Deeply fascinated by the bridges between spoken and musical language, Pintscher — who learned Hebrew while living in Israel during his 20s — remarks that "words [in Hebrew] are like islands, like energy sources" because so much is derived from "short root words" — such as the root *rosh* ("head") in *bereshit*. Elsewhere, Pintscher likens the piece to "a great river."

CONTINUED ►►

Gougalōn

Gougalōn was originally performed in 2009, but Unsuk Chin expanded the work to six movements on a commission from EIC, which premiered the new version in Paris in 2012 under Susanna Mälkki. Each of the six short movements is a title that hints at different aspects of Chin’s memories of these interlopers and their “dilettante and shabby music.” They also performed stunts and attracted peddlers of every variety, including “wig-dealers from whom young girls could earn some money for their families by sacrificing their pigtails,” notes the composer. As part of the ensemble, Chin calls for four harmonicas and prepared piano to evoke the aura of a town fair.

- I. *Prologue: Dramatic Opening of the Curtain*
- II. *Lament of the Bald Singer*
- III. *The Grinning Fortune Teller with the False Teeth*
- IV. *Episode between Bottles and Cans*
- V. *Circulus vitiosos: Dance around the Shacks*
- VI. *The Hunt for the Quack’s Plait*

CONTINUED FROM PREVIOUS PAGE

IN SEARCH OF BEGINNING

EIC premiered *bereshit* in Paris early in 2012; later that year, Pintscher introduced his two-part *Chute d’Étoiles* (“Falling Stars”), which similarly addresses the theme of cosmic beginnings — here, conceptualized as the Big Bang and paying homage to a sculptural installation by Anselm Kiefer.

The musical point of departure in *bereshit* is also a psychological one: “as if you woke up in a strange room in the pitch darkness of night, realizing your whereabouts only after a few seconds,” according to the composer. “In this state, you attempt to make out the shapes of the space. It is a beginning of a beginning from absolute darkness and shapelessness. Very cautiously and gradually, particles disentangle and then condense, fitting together in shapes.”

The initial sound, emerging from silence, is an incredibly soft, flutelike, sustained F in the highest register of a solo double bass. Pintscher likens the note F to a “horizon” that stretches across the composition. It gives way to percussive sounds “from which elements then detach and condense.” He describes the music as “highly organic,” the material “developing slowly, in quasi-chronological fashion.” Overall, *bereshit* “arose from the idea of liberating an entire compendium of sounds, gestures, rhythms, and orchestral combinations from a primordial state of

sound.” Within Pintscher’s body of work, *bereshit*’s concept of sound and space “ventures far beyond the chamber music-like dimension of ensemble forces.”

The creative act of imagining beginnings can also take a critical turn, driven by the urge to call attention to what has gone wrong. The legacy Eleanora Harris Fagan (professionally known as Billie Holiday) has been enshrouded in romanticizing myth that blots out memories of the racism she endured and that countless others still endure. Olga Neuwirth looks back to the reality she faced, as an African-American artist and woman. Her suffering is bridged by the unacceptable truth that more than 50 years after the assassination of Martin Luther King, Jr. (in 1968, the year in which Neuwirth was born), the “shameful conditions” that King denounced in his final speech have persisted.

Eleanor, writes Neuwirth “is a tribute to all those who have dared and still dare to voice criticism despite social and political opposition. In our oh-so-worldly times, when even faint dissent is seen as a threat, fingers are scandalously quick to pull triggers. *Eleanor* would, however, especially like to pay tribute to courageous women — which explains the woman’s name in the title. Here the spotlight is on the many forgotten female African-American jazz musicians from the era ‘when men ruled the beat.’”

Neuwirth’s encounters with racism and sexism during her various stays in the United States forced her to confront the intense contradictions at the root of American society. Its vibrant cultural pluralism — a signature of *Eleanor* and of Neuwirth’s music in general — attracted her: even as a youngster studying trumpet back in her native Austria, Neuwirth dreamed of following in the footsteps of Miles Davis. Her father was, in fact, a jazz pianist. In 2006, in pre-Obama America, she embarked on *American Lulu*, a radical new take on Alban Berg’s unfinished opera *Lulu*. Neuwirth set the story in the Civil Rights era, incorporating speeches from King as well as the poetry of June Jordan to dramatize the courage of those resisting systemic racism and discrimination against women.

Eleanor, commissioned by the Salzburg Festival, premiered in 2015, with Della Miles creating the title role as “blues singer” and Tyshawn Sorey on percussion. Neuwirth adapted material from the third act of *American Lulu* for *Eleanor*, which, as the composer explains, “tries to mount a kind of accusation from the standpoint of one person alone. Without giving the perpetrators a voice, Neuwirth develops a structure in which “the woman’s voice is surrounded and symbolically encouraged” by narrations from King’s speeches and

Jordan’s poetry. The drum-kit player also becomes her “ally.” Neuwirth provides further commentary:

“Beginning in childhood, [Eleanor/ Billie Holiday’s] life was marked by abuse, which left deep wounds. Wounds that made it difficult to live. Her great talent and the enormity of her soul and spirit were thus constantly fighting a sense of emptiness. Nothing was able to dull her profound nihilism.

Which is why I have replaced the cultivated aura of classical song with the directness of the blues. *Eleanor* insists on the irrevocability of pain and her own subjectivity. She struggles for freedom, treading a difficult path, yet one she has chosen. Despite the abuse, she self-confidently seeks her own form of expression, her own identity. Music and text have been conceived to unleash an unrelenting maelstrom. The musical form should exude a spontaneity that is not, as so often in ‘contemporary classical’ music, obstructed by structural limitations. *Eleanor* begins like a review of old blues records in the tradition of Williams, Lambert and Hendricks: with quasi instrumental jazz vocals — transformed by means of percussion, electric piano, and electric guitar into an illusory now.

Eleanor was a spontaneous expression of my helplessness and outrage at the racist violence and bloodshed committed in the editorial offices of *Charlie Hebdo*. I could not and did not want to remain silent. After the initial shock, the time had come to find the courage to reflect. The piece was already almost finished, but I did not want to let the heat of that moment dissipate, because doing so would not, as we have so often been told, lead automatically to a more balanced truth. I wanted to react right away and not later, when everything had ‘settled’ down.

Eleanor is my way of showing solidarity and protesting artistically against the daily pressures to conform, and against external and internal repression.”

—THOMAS MAY

Friday, June 12, 2020 | 8:00am

Zalk Theater, Besant Hill School

Ojai Dawns

OLGA NEUWIRTH

in the realms of the unreal

FRANZ SCHUBERT

String Quartet in G Major, D. 887

1. Allegro molto moderato
2. Andante un poco moto
3. Allegro vivace
4. Allegro assai

Calder Quartet

Benjamin Jacobson *violin*

Tereza Stanislav *violin*

Jonathan Moerschel *viola*

Eric Byers *cello*

Olga Neuwirth (b. 1968)

in the realms of the unreal (2009; rev. 2011)

Franz Schubert (1797-1828)

String Quartet in G Major, D. 887 (1826)

Outsider Art

Olga Neuwirth approaches each composition with a radical individuality. Each work responds unpredictably to whatever stimulus has sparked her imagination, with the result that her music sounds remarkably different from piece to piece. At the same time, Neuwirth has forged this breathtaking diversity into a unique and unmistakable style rich in allusion, flexible, and provocative in its ambiguity. As Catherine Kerkhoff-Saxon remarks: "Her genre-crossing works, which cannot be associated with any one school, are free and uninhibited."

That holds true not only across the span of Neuwirth's creative output but within a given composition as well. Characteristically, each new piece involves an exhilarating blend of inspirations from and beyond the world of music. *in the realms of the unreal*, for example, probes the very idea of the string quartet. It also pays homage to the American novelist and artist Henry Darger (see sidebar), taking its name from a manuscript that was found after his death in 1973 amid the clutter of his Chicago apartment.

The Story of the Vivian Girls, in What is known as The Realms of the Unreal, of the Glandeco-Angelinnian War Storm, Caused by the Child Slave Rebellion runs the fittingly epic title that adorns Darger's vast work of fiction (more than 15,000 pages of typescript), which the self-taught artist accompanied with a sequence of watercolor scrolls.

Neuwirth composed *in the realms of the unreal* — the title itself resonates with music — in late 2009, while living in Venice, for the Arditti Quartet, which gave its premiere in Paris; she revised the score in 2011. Her works are usually sui generis, conceptually and in their instrumentation, but even when Neuwirth addresses a genre and medium as weighted by classical tradition as the string quartet, surprises abound. This is the third quartet in her oeuvre, preceded by two others from the 1990s: *Akroate Hadal* (inspired by the fable-spoof *Vampyroteuthis Infernalis* by the cultural philosophers Vilém Flusser and Louis Bec, which involves an imaginary sea monster) and *settori*, which glosses on the earlier work from new perspectives.

Relying solely on an acoustic ensemble of four strings, Neuwirth constructs a soundscape of almost unbelievable variety and dramatic contrast. A sustained chord of quarter-tones clustered around A sets the music in motion, fluoresces, is cut off by silence, after which G becomes the anchor. The unifying motto of the piece, A and G also form the initials of the composer's beloved grandmother (Alfreda Gallowitsch), who had recently died and to whose memory the work is dedicated.

The first two minutes alone encompass aggressive, knife-sharp attacks, agitated bowings, floated harmonics, arpeggios light as rainbows, alongside a fleeting, subliminal recall of the "polite" classical quartet. Such rapid-fire contrasts are simultaneously riveting and unsettling — Neuwirth refers to "catastrophe music." Fingernail pizzicati and feverish glissandi continue to expand the sonic repertoire, which includes a celestial passage almost midway through of high-lying harmonics and flute effects — like a distant memory of the *Lohengrin Prelude* — that gives way to a mad waltz.

Festival artists' bios and music playlists available at OjaiFestival.org

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The Outsider Art of Henry Darger (1892-1973)

Henry Darger has become something of a pop-cult hero — inspiring music by alt-rock artists like Natalie Merchant — but lived a painfully solitary existence after growing up institutionalized in an asylum for children where punishment and child labor were standard. Finding a niche working as a hospital janitor for many decades, Darger produced massive fantasy narratives that process the abuses he suffered and witnessed. His accompanying illustrations “envision a cosmic, erotically charged struggle between good and evil, innocence and experience, freedom and captivity,” according to the art critic Ken Johnson, who also likens Darger’s visual style to “William Blake meets L. Frank Baum’s *Wizard of Oz*.”

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OUTSIDER ART

Though cast as a single movement, *in the realms of the unreal* traverses a gestural and emotional spectrum at least as wide as that of Schubert’s mammoth G Major Quartet, which is a good two-and-a-half times as long. Neuwirth’s predecessor and fellow Austrian, like Darger, created a vast body of work that remained unknown to the world at large until after his death. The last — and most ambitious — of his essays in the genre, the G Major Quartet dates from June 1826 (a bit over two years before he died) but remained unheard in its entirety until 1850. *Death and the Maiden*, the nickname of the D minor Quartet from 1824 that preceded this work, is also the title of an electronic score for ballet that Neuwirth wrote to a text that deconstructs the Sleeping Beauty legend by her frequent collaborator, the Nobel Prize-winning writer Elfriede Jelinek.

Juxtaposed against the opening chords of *in the realms of the unreal*, the way Schubert launches this quartet can be heard from a fresh perspective. Like Neuwirth, Schubert unlocks the

immense power of abrupt contrasts — above all, from major to minor, casting an ambiguous shadow within the first measures, one that defines much of what is to come. He similarly exploits contrasts of dynamics, careening from fierce outbursts — note how these undo the tranquility established in the first part of the slow movement — to frightening silence.

“I’m afraid there are moments in life when even Schubert has nothing to say to us,” remarks one of Henry James’s characters in *The Portrait of a Lady*. “We must admit, however, that they are our worst.” Even Schubert, an outsider in his own way, and all too aware of his fragile health, seems at moments here to reach a nadir of despair — of the music having nothing to say but yielding to silence. The light-hearted scarring of the Scherzo proves all the more powerful as a foil. Schubert again underscores the quartet’s tonal ambiguity in the dizzying oscillation between minor and major of the tarantella-driven finale.

—THOMAS MAY

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“These are definitely extraordinary times. Every year, the festival is such a special experience for us & we will miss it greatly this year.”

—BETTY AND ROBERT EMIRHANIAN

”

Friday, June 12, 2020 | 11:00am

Libbey Bowl

Genesis Cycle US Premiere

CHAYA CZERNOWIN

On the Face of the Deep (First Day), for large ensemble

MARKO NIKODIJEVIC

dies secundus (Second Day), for ensemble

FRANCK BEDROSSIAN

Vayehi erev vayehi boker (Third Day), for ensemble

ANNA THORVALDSDOTTIR

Illumine (Fourth Day), for string octet

JOAN MAGRANÉ FIGUERA

Marines i boscatges (Fifth Day), for 14 instruments

STEFANO GERVASONI

Eufaunique (Sixth Day), for ensemble

MARK ANDRE

riss 1 (Seventh Day), for ensemble

TOSHIO HOSOKAWA

The Flood (Eighth Day), for ensemble

World Premiere and co-commissioned by the Ensemble intercontemporain and the Ojai Music Festival

Ensemble intercontemporain (EIC)
Matthias Pintscher *conductor*

Festival artists' bios and music playlists available at OjaiFestival.org

Chaya Czernowin (b. 1957)
On the Face of the Deep (2017)

Marko Nikodijević (b. 1980)
dies secundus (2017)

Franck Bedrossian (b. 1971)
Vayehi erev vayehi boker (2017)

Anna Thorvaldsdottir (b. 1977)
Illumine (2016)

Joan Magrané Figuera (b. 1988)
Marines i boscatges (2016)

Stefano Gervasoni (b. 1962)
Eufaunique (2016-17)

Mark Andre (b. 1964)
riss 1 (2015-17; rev. 2019)

Toshio Hosokawa (b. 1955)
The Flood (2020)

The Labyrinth of Musical Creation

What does it mean to “create” a new piece of music? Where does the process start? Pierre Boulez famously declared: “Music is a labyrinth with no beginning and no end, full of new paths to discover, where mystery remains eternal.” He founded the Ensemble intercontemporain (EIC) in 1976 as a collective of virtuosos — and, you might say, a mega-instrument — to explore that labyrinth from a contemporary perspective.

The *Genesis Cycle* was launched to celebrate EIC’s 40th anniversary. Because Boulez died at the beginning of 2016, it also became a remembrance of his legacy of seeking out new artistic voices and “new paths” — as seen in his encouragement of Matthias Pintscher, who started his tenure as music director of EIC in 2013.

To mark the milestone, EIC commissioned seven composers, broadly ranging in age, background, origin, and aesthetic temperament, to respond to the same stimulus: the creation myth recounted at the beginning of the *Book of Genesis*. Each composer became responsible for a different day in the week of Creation.

Pintscher had previously written his own meditation on the first word of the Hebrew Scriptures (*bereshit*), which was heard in the opening concert. He gave the seven composers free rein, aside from these parameters: they had to restrict their instrumentation to the ensemble, without special additional forces; the pieces had to be instrumental, with no setting of text; and each piece had to give special prominence to the E-flat at the center of the keyboard, so that the pitch would function as a sort of “horizon” (the same image Pintscher uses for the role that F plays in his *bereshit*).

The unpredictability of the outcomes was an essential feature. In the case of Haydn’s late-period oratorio *The Creation*, the composer’s unifying perspective in telling the same story reaffirms Enlightenment values. The diversity — along with the contradictions — of the *Genesis Cycle* is attuned to the present era.

First Day: The first separation that *Genesis* describes is that between “heaven and earth.” Before light is created — thereby inaugurating the very first distinction between day and night — “darkness

was upon the face of the deep.” What especially struck Israeli composer Chaya Czernowin about this passage describing the First Day was “the gap between chaos, the void, and the abyss on the one hand and, on the other, this divine presence that is simply there and which is observed from above.” Her piece conveys a wondrous sense of new sonorities emerging, of the fascinating beauty of *disorder*.

Second Day: Serbian composer Marko Nikodijević found the biblical description of the separation of “the waters from the waters” to be “extremely musical” in itself. Recalling the metaphor favored by Boulez, he refers to the creative act as a labyrinth and frequently works from pre-existing material. The “horizontal” E-flat that lies in the general background of the whole cycle is violently sounded at the start (notated as a D-sharp, the same tone on the keyboard).

Third Day: E-flat, though heavily clouded by opaque harmonies, is heard at the start of Franck Bedrossian’s piece, titled after the Hebrew words meaning “and the evening and the morning,” which recur, refrain-like, to bridge the account of

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THE LABYRINTH OF MUSICAL CREATION

each day. A native Parisian who studied at IRCAM, Bedrossian was attracted to “the dynamic dimension of the Third Day and its elements of contrast”: the separation of the seas and dry land and the emergence of plant life, which involves a “dramaturgy without people,” as he puts it. Reflecting the dichotomy of night and day, the piece is in two parts, with jazzy eruptions in the second (where the instrumental group for the most part “should sound like a hybrid between acoustics and electronics”).

Fourth Day: “I work by seeking inspiration from light and darkness, from the contrasts between them, the different degrees of ‘imposing light’ and ‘least light,’ the structure of the seasons, and the relations between the sun, the moon, and the stars,” says the Icelandic composer Anna Thorvaldsdottir, who studied at the University of California San Diego. *Illumine* offers her response to the complex creation of the earth’s lighting system of sun, moon, and stars. Thorvaldsdottir scores her piece for eight strings (three violins, two violas, two cellos, and a double bass), weaving their lines into a great variety of textures.

Fifth Day: The youngest of the cycle’s composers, Joan Magrané Figuera studied in Paris with Stefano Gervasoni (composer of the Sixth Day). The title of his contribution comes from a collection of stories published in the early 20th century by fellow Catalan writer Joaquim Ruyra.

For the Fifth Day — on which creatures that swim and fly are given life — Figuera homes in on the symbolic significance of the numbers five (the day) and seven (the week). These numbers he translates into intervals and instrumental combinations, with a trio of percussionists serving as a kind of continuo, together with harp and piano. In the third part, he quotes from the famous early-17th-century madrigal *The Silver Swan* by Orlando Gibbons.

Sixth Day: “Throughout the whole of *Genesis*, we witness a twofold process of separation and refinement,” says the Italian composer Stefano Gervasoni, who studied with Györgi Ligeti and at IRCAM and is now on the faculty at the Paris Conservatoire. *Genesis* offers an extensive account of the Sixth Day, which accounts for the vast biodiversity of the land, including the creation of humankind — with the added qualification that “God saw everything that he had made, and, behold, it was very good.” Accordingly, *Eufonique* comprises several episodes wherein elementary gestures ramify into glorious complexity.

Seventh Day: Creation Week culminates in a day of rest, as God surveys what he has created. A former student of both Gerard Grisey and Helmut Lachenmann, the Paris-born Mark Andre shows a fascination for subtle sonorities and gradations. The longest of the pieces in the original cycle, *riss 1* (German for “crack” or “tear”) bridges

the Old and New Testaments, suggesting a link between the Seventh Day and “the life of Jesus of Nazareth, who was baptized in the River Jordan that flows through the deepest valley in the world,” explains the composer. “During the Passion, the heavens are rent asunder.”

Eighth Day: For this performance, EIC and Ojai joined to commission *The Flood* by the eminent Japanese composer Toshio Hosokawa, who dedicates his new piece to the Ensemble intercontemporain and Matthias Pintscher. Writes the composer: “In *Genesis*, the human world created by God has become overrun by evil, and God upon seeing this created a Flood and tried to destroy humankind. He saved only Noah’s family and commanded Noah to build an ark. The ‘flood’ is a familiar theme for us Japanese. The damages made by the tsunami in 2011 are symbolic, but it does not come only from that, as we are also often raided by typhoons, heavy rain, and flooding. Floods of water when out of control, make us aware of the strong energy of nature and create a sense of fear and even of reverence in us. In my short piece *The Flood*, sound waves created by acoustic crescendos and decrescendos are repeated. The acoustic spiral created here causes us to feel the ‘fear’ and at the same time leaves us feeling purified.” *The Flood* thus opens the way to a new path within the *Genesis* labyrinth and the start of a new cycle of creation.

—THOMAS MAY



“Although we will miss our own Ojai friends whose company makes the Festival so enjoyable, we applaud your online efforts to honor the creative composers, musicians, and singers whom we hope to see flourish again.”

—JUNE AND SHED BEHAR



Friday, June 12, 2020 | 7:30pm

Libbey Bowl

FELIX MENDELSSOHN

Octet in E-flat Major, Op. 20

Allegro moderato ma con fuoco
Andante
Scherzo: Allegro leggierissimo
Presto

Calder Quartet

Benjamin Jacobson *violin*

Tereza Stanislav *violin*

Jonathan Moerschel *viola*

Eric Byers *cello*

Nathan Cole *violin*

Akiko Tarumoto *violin*

Ben Ullery *viola*

Dahae Kim *cello*

MATTHIAS PINTSCHER

Nur

Ensemble intercontemporain (EIC)

Matthias Pintscher *conductor*

STEVE REICH

Tehillim

LA Phil New Music Group

Paolo Bortolameolli *conductor*

Festival artists' bios and music playlists available at OjaiFestival.org

Felix Mendelssohn (1809-1847)

Octet in E-flat Major, Op. 20 (1825)

Matthias Pintscher (b. 1971)

Nur (2018)

Steve Reich (b. 1936)

Tehillim (1981)

Fire, Metal, and Praise

"You are my David, and if I am ever ill or sad, you must banish my bad dreams by your playing; I shall never throw my spear at you, as Saul did." The elderly Goethe's comparison of young Felix Mendelssohn to the Biblical king and psalmist is among the most touching testimonies of their extraordinary, intergenerational friendship.

After being introduced to the 12-year-old prodigy in 1821, Goethe invited Mendelssohn to his home on several occasions. Initially, the reigning figure of German letters — whose own gifts manifested at a miraculously young age — was reminded of his long-ago encounter with the child Mozart in the early 1760s.

Already during his teenage years, Mendelssohn was rapidly making his way through all the genres. And his creative drive was hardly limited to music. He studied painting and watercolor and showed a passionate interest in classical antiquity. In 1825, the year of the Octet, Mendelssohn made a stylish German translation of a comedy by the Latin writer Terence, *The Woman of Andros*. It was in grateful response to this work, which shows the influence of Goethe's

own classical renderings, that the poet compared his young friend to David.

In short, young Mendelssohn was assiduously pursuing the ideal of *Bildung* — the humanistic cultivation of an autonomous sense of self — advocated not only Goethe but by his own grandfather, Moses Mendelssohn, the leading light of the Jewish Enlightenment of the 18th century. "Every person has their own religion:" Goethe approvingly quoted the Mendelssohn patriarch's saying in his autobiography.

Mendelssohn completed the Octet, widely regarded as his first full-scale masterpiece, in October 1825. Its status as a miracle of youth tends to overshadow what would be a display of imaginative brilliance at any age. Mendelssohn's scoring for eight players is emphatically not a string quartet doubled. The Octet, he noted, "must be played by all of the instruments in the symphonic orchestral style."

Mendelssohn's ingenious adjustments of relative textural weights and registers almost anticipate later experiments with spatial music. The vast opening

movement is ambitious, suggesting the sweep of Beethoven's Eroica (also in E-flat). Woven into the fabric as well is evidence of his time spent with, and thinking about, Goethe: particularly in the intricate, gossamer Scherzo. Felix's sister Fanny revealed that his imagination had been fired by a passage from the eldritch Walpurgisnacht scene of Goethe's *Faust*, Part I.

Through his tutelage under Carl Friedrich Zelter — the pedagogue who introduced him to Goethe — Mendelssohn acquired a sure grounding in contrapuntal technique, displayed in all its glory in the exuberant, Handel-quoting, fugal finale.

Matthias Pintscher was also still in his teens when he impressed the late Hans Werner Henze and found a powerful model in his "imaginary, instrumental theater" for his own musical language. Having written numerous concertos for other instruments, Pintscher had resisted requests to write one for the piano for years but found the impetus when the philanthropist Paul Sekhri commissioned him to write a work for Daniel Barenboim and the Boulez Ensemble, who gave the premiere in January 2019.

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FIRE, METAL, AND PRAISE

The title *Nur* inspired Pintscher because of its many layers of meaning. *Nur* is a transliteration of the ancient Hebrew word for “fire” (נֹר) which, he points out, is a root shared by Arabic (النور) — where it also appears as the name (male or female) Noor. The title is meant to represent “various forms of fire, all sorts of states.”

Nur is not so much a piano concerto as a “dialogue between this metallic instrument and what it elicits in the sonic realm of the orchestra,” as the composer explains: metal and its shadow. “The piano rises up from this acoustically dark space” in the opening and reaches, at the center, a moment “where the ash speaks” — this is “what remains after the fire, in fine, tender, isolated little spots. The music returns to the point where silence is the actual event.”

In the final section, the piano’s “metallic brilliance” comes to the fore. As a whole, *Nur* evokes fire’s immemorial associations with myth, ritual, transformation — with the fire of artistic inspiration itself.

A Hebrew title also graces *Tehillim*, a landmark composition in Steve Reich’s long career. “Western music before 1750 and from Debussy onwards, as well as jazz and non-Western music, are the sources from which I’ve drawn almost everything,”

Steve Reich once observed. Within the rich spectrum of those non-Western musical sources can be found Ghanaian drumming, Balinese gamelan, and the Sephardic music he encountered in the mid-1970s in Israel.

The last involved a fresh encounter with Reich’s own roots and has born fruit in numerous compositions that reflect on the meaning of Jewish tradition and philosophy. *Tehillim*, premiered in 1981, is the first of these — and Reich’s first piece incorporating voices since the mid-1960s, when he experimented with taped material. Here, he scores for four female voices plus chamber ensemble (with voices, winds, and strings amplified).

Referring to the Biblical Psalms attributed to David, *Tehillim* literally means “praises,” Reich explains, adding that the word derives from the same three-letter Hebrew root as does “Hallelujah.” The work is divided into four parts based, respectively on these Psalms (Hebrew sources are followed by the equivalent Christian translations shown in parentheses): 19:2-5 (19:1-4), 34:13-15 (34:12-14), 18:26-27 (18:25-26), and 150:4-6.

“One of the reasons I chose to set Psalms as opposed to parts of the Torah or Prophets,” according to Reich, “is that the

oral tradition among Jews in the West for singing Psalms has been lost. (It has been maintained by Yemenite Jews.) This meant that I was free to compose the melodies for *Tehillim* without a living oral tradition to either imitate or ignore.” Handclapping, rattles, tuned tambourines without jingles, and small pitched cymbals are the closest analogues he uses to instruments that would have made music in the Biblical period. “Beyond this, there is no musicological content to *Tehillim*. No Jewish themes were used for any of the melodic materials.” The rhythms of the texts suggest the musical rhythms.

For the first text, Reich implements a sequence of canons leading up to all four voices in canon on each of the text’s four verses. A transition on the drum leads to two- or three-voice harmony for Psalm 34, with English horn, clarinet, drums, and clapping interwoven into the texture. The attention to melody here is inspired by Reich’s experiences of Sephardic cantillation.

The third part (Psalm 18), a slow movement, is unusually chromatic and begins as a duet between two of the voices. Ending with Psalm 150, Reich recapitulates ideas from the first three parts, returning to the opening tempo, and ends with full ensemble for a setting of *Halleluyah*.

—THOMAS MAY

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“We are sorry as well, especially for those who will miss out on the potentially life changing experiences that happen almost every year.”

—ROB AND NANCY STEWART

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Saturday, June 13, 2020 | 8:00am

Zalk Theater, Besant Hill School

Ojai Dawns

JOHN CAGE

String Quartet in Four Parts

1. Quietly Flowing Along
2. Slowly Rocking
3. Nearly Stationary
4. Quodlibet

Calder Quartet

Benjamin Jacobson *violin*
Tereza Stanislav *violin*
Jonathan Moerschel *viola*
Eric Byers *cello*

MATTHIAS PINTSCHER

Uriel

Eric Byers *cello*
Kevin Kwan Loucks *piano*

CHARLES IVES

String Quartet No. 2 (Calder)

1. Discussions (Andante moderato-Andante con spirito-Adagio molto)
2. Arguments (Allegro con spirito)
3. The Call of the Mountains (Adagio-Andante-Adagio)

Calder Quartet

Festival artists' bios and music playlists available at OjaiFestival.org

John Cage (1912-1992)

String Quartet in Four Parts (1950)

Matthias Pintscher (b. 1971)

Uriel (2011-12)

Charles Ives (1874-1954)

String Quartet No. 2 (1907-13)

Seasons of the Sublime

In 1946, just one year before the Ojai Music Festival was founded, John Cage had a life-changing encounter with the Indian singer and tabla player Gita Sarabhai. "She was concerned about the influence Western music was having on traditional Indian music, and she'd decided to study Western music for six months with several teachers and then return to India to do what she could to preserve the Indian traditions," Cage wrote. He offered to teach her for free if she would in turn help him understand Indian music.

The mutual exchange left a profound mark on Cage, who was coping with personal crisis during these years. When Sarabhai introduced him to the *Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna*, the effect was so powerful that it "took the place of psychoanalysis," he remarked. Cage recalled that from Sarabhai he learned that "the purpose of music is to sober and quiet the mind, thus making it susceptible to divine influences." Along with aesthetic and metaphysical ideas from Hinduism, Cage also continued to explore his ongoing interest in Zen Buddhism and its concepts of silence and mindfulness.

The *Sonatas and Interludes* for prepared piano explored what Cage called the "permanent emotions" of Indian tradition ... and their common tendency toward tranquility." He turned to the Hindu understanding of the annual cycle in his 1947 ballet *The Seasons* (with Lou Harrison contributing his efforts as an orchestrator). In *String Quartet in Four Parts*, composed between 1949 and 1950 and dedicated to Harrison, Cage again used the cycle of seasons as understood in Hinduism as a framework, tracing the phases of creation, preservation, destruction, and quiescence (which are associated with spring, summer, fall, winter, respectively). Cage's plan begins with summer and proceeds through the cycle, ending with spring.

Cage traveled to Europe in 1949 — where he met and was initially championed by Pierre Boulez — and started composing the quartet while in Paris during the summer: hence, the work begins with the season of "preservation." The tempo seems to slow down gradually to near stasis for the third part (winter) and then suddenly quickens for the season of creative renewal, spring.

But within this familiar, four-movement context, Cage's sound world is alien and often bewildering. The material comprises a kind of palette (Cage called it a "gamut") of fixed sonorities, organized in advance, each of which remains unchanged each time it recurs. The light bowing and lack of vibrato he requests result in a weirdly archaic, not-quite-early-music sound.

If such austere melodies generate an aura of calm illumination, Matthias Pintscher's *Uriel* is "about resonances, about the inward and outward givens of existence, about life itself," as he observes. Hebrew titles are found throughout his oeuvre — as with *bereshit* and *nur*, both of which are part of the programming of this year's Festival — though *Uriel* is also recognized in English as one of the principal figures in the hierarchy of angels — described by Milton as the "sharpest sighted spirit in all of Heaven" and cast as a tenor narrator in Haydn's *Creation*.

The Hebrew word itself means "light of God." The archangel Uriel is additionally associated with "God's fire," the sun, illumination, and artistic inspiration.

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SEASONS OF THE SUBLIME

Pintscher wrote *Uriel* in 2011-12 but later made it the final panel in a chamber triptych he calls *Profiles of Light*. The cycle begins with *Now I*, a work for solo piano in homage to his great mentor Pierre Boulez on his 90th birthday, and *Now II* for solo cello (both from 2015).

The names of all three pieces derive from the work of the American abstract expressionist Barnett Newman. His essay *The Sublime Is Now* points to the ways in which American abstract artists “free from the weight of European culture” (in 1947) reassert the “natural desire for the exalted.”

Pintscher, an avid collector of visual art, was especially drawn to the essence Newman distills in his painting *Uriel* (1955): “The closer Newman got to death, the more luminous his work became,”

he says. Pintscher chose the cello as a highly suitable instrument for depicting such existential conditions” — mediating between the inward and outward illumination signified by the angel.

Following Cage’s elate stasis and Pintscher’s exquisite, visionary dialogue between cello and piano, Charles Ives’s Second String Quartet stages a stunning range of confrontations. The composer supplied a terse program of his own: “Four men — who converse, discuss, argue (in re ‘Politick’), fight, shake hands, shut up — then walk up the mountainside to view the firmament.” Along the way, their discourse is a far remove from Goethe’s “conversation between four reasonable, intelligent people.”

Annoyed by what he perceived as the affected refinement of the classical European tradition of quartet playing, Ives produced one of his most challenging, most maverick creations in the Second Quartet. He composed it between 1911 and 1913 but drew on earlier material; the work was not premiered until 1946 at Juilliard.

Woven into the score, as expected with Ives, is an abundance of musical quotations, both vernacular American tunes and the flotsam of Old World tradition (Beethoven’s “Ode to Joy”) — all set against a sinewy atonal background. The final, transcendent movement in particular sets a snippet from Tchaikovsky’s *Pathétique* against “Nearer My God to Thee.”

—THOMAS MAY

“

“It saddens us to miss this year’s event, however, we understand the need to cancel it. The efforts the organization puts into its success pales in the face of our humble contribution.”

—RAFFI AND MYRNA MESROBIAN

”

Saturday, June 13, 2020 | 11:00am

Libbey Bowl

GYÖRGY LIGETI

Concerto for Piano and Orchestra

- I. Vivace molto ritmico e preciso
- II. Lento e deserto
- III. Vivace cantabile
- IV. Allegro risoluto
- V. Presto luminoso

Ensemble intercontemporain (EIC)

Hidéki Nagano *piano*

Matthias Pintscher *conductor*

J.S. BACH

Brandenburg Concerto No. 4 in G Major, BWV 1049

- Allegro
- Andante
- Presto

Ojai Music Festival Ensemble

OLGA NEUWIRTH

Aello – ballet mécanomorphe

EIC

Matthias Pintscher *conductor*

Festival artists' bios and music playlists available at OjaiFestival.org

György Ligeti (1923-2006)

Concerto for Piano and Orchestra (final version, 1988)

J.S. Bach (1685-1750)

Brandenburg Concerto No. 4 in G Major, BWV 1049 (completed in 1721)

Olga Neuwirth (b. 1968)

Aello – ballet mécanomorphe (2017)

Swerving In and Out of Time

In a beautiful obituary she wrote for Pierre Boulez in 2016, Olga Neuwirth recalls being captivated by his “musical personality” while still a teenager growing up in the Austrian provinces. She found inspiration not only in his music but in Boulez’s “utmost conviction that we are living in the here and now and that we must think and write music accordingly, while countering cynicism and indifference.”

How does the endeavor to write music that acknowledges our “living in the here and now” play out in a context that’s as self-conscious about traditions and historical connections as classical music? The program Matthias Pintscher has designed for this concert presents examples both by Neuwirth and by György Ligeti, another leading figure of the Boulez generation whose music shares her spirit of unpredictable imagination and fondness for what the absurd can disclose. The idea of the concerto itself, around which this program revolves, ranks among the most enduring genre conventions in classical art music — and has proved to be inexhaustible precisely through the innovations, the infusion of the “here and now,” by composers such as Neuwirth and Ligeti.

In the wake of his sole opera *Le Grand Macabre* (he called it an “anti-anti-opera”), which premiered in 1978, Ligeti — always skeptical of dogma and systematic approaches — endured a creative dry spell during which he struggled with finding his way forward. The Jewish-Hungarian composer ceased to produce any significant new works, though he continued making, as he put it, “hundreds of sketches, only to abandon them.” During this period, he was hard at work on a commission for a piano concerto. Its genesis cost enormous creative toil — and opened the way to a way out of his dilemma.

By the 1980s, the postwar avant-garde’s utopian idealism had mostly faded, while the emerging ideology of post-modernism seemed, to Ligeti, to encourage a reactionary if not cynical stance of bad faith: this was the past recuperated as commodity. Ligeti *did* refocus his lens on the past, but with characteristic originality and quirkiness, in ways that are thrillingly unsettling. His Horn Trio of 1982, for example, is an explicit homage to the template Brahms created, while at the same time a creative swerving from the source (to borrow the literary critic Harold Bloom’s term).

Ligeti meanwhile persevered in several stages with the Piano Concerto. After unveiling his first version in the traditional three-movement format in 1986, he concluded that it “demanded continuation” and added two more movements, with the fourth now serving as the conceptual center of the whole work. This final version was first performed in 1988. Ligeti considered the result no less than a statement of his “artistic credo” showing his “independence from criteria of the traditional avant-garde, as well as the fashionable postmodernism.”

The Piano Concerto realizes what Ligeti called “new concepts of harmony and rhythm.” One of his students, the Puerto Rican composer Roberto Sierra, sparked his fascination with different kinds of rhythmic complexity from Latin American and African cultures. These impulses set the stage in the opening movement, in which Ligeti splits the ensemble into two parts, each playing a different meter. The Concerto exploits “illusory rhythmic and illusory melody,” as Ligeti defines the *trompe l’oreille* effects of individual layers that, in concert, cause us to hear patterns that are not actually written in the score. Similarly, Ligeti is fond of tricking the ear with counterintuitive instrumentation (high

CONTINUED ►►

SWERVING IN AND OUT OF TIME

instruments playing in low register and vice versa) and unexpected sounds from the ocarina and slide whistle.

Still another inspiration comes from the ground shared between science and art — which is the case for Neuwirth as well. Ligeti delighted in computer simulations of the Julia and Mandelbrot fractal sets. The fourth movement emulates such “self-similar” structures on a poetic level — becoming a metaphor for the general principle of remaking and renewing the past, what is given, in the here and now: “always new but however of the same,” per Ligeti. Overall, the Piano Concerto represents his “main intention as a composer”: to convey “the spell of time, the enduring its passing by, closing it in a moment of the present.”

Olga Neuwirth’s *Aello – ballet mécanomorphe* originated as part of the “Bach Brandenburg Project” commissioned by the Swedish Chamber Orchestra and the Danish conductor Thomas Dausgaard. The project set out to present a contemporary counterpart to the group of six concertos that J.S. Bach presented in 1721 to the Margrave of Brandenburg-Schwedt (half-brother of Friedrich I of Prussia). Neuwirth was

assigned to respond to Brandenburg Concerto No. 4. (The other five composers include Uri Caine, Brett Dean, Anders Hillborg, Steven Mackey, and Mark Anthony Turnage.)

Bach’s revered collection was apparently never even heard by their namesake, who lacked the richly varied musical resources and virtuoso musicians needed to realize them. Familiar as they have become, the Brandenburg Concertos themselves subvert and interrogate the conventions that had grown up around what was then the still-young genre of the Baroque concerto in three movements (fast-slow-fast). While the concertmaster had emerged as the expected virtuoso soloist for a concerto, “a whole concerto is now to be dominated by two violas, or two flutes, or even by the harpsichord,” notes Dausgaard. “Hierarchy has been dissolved and an alternative world-order presented.”

No. 4 in G Major is scored for strings and continuo and three soloists: violin and a pair of *flauti dolci* or *flauti d’echo* (possibly treble recorders) — a much-debated phrase whose interpretation played a key role in Neuwirth’s choice of instrumentation for her new work. The outer movements behave like

a chamber violin concerto, as Bach assigns much virtuosity to the solo violin, with its two wind companions offering encouragement.

Premiered in 2018, *Aello – ballet mécanomorphe* at first suggests a direct bridge between the musical past and the “here and now” — Brandenburg Concerto No. 4 is, after all, its model, formally and thematically as well as in terms of instrumentation. Yet Neuwirth “swerves” from all of these parameters in wonderfully unexpected ways. Investigating what Bach may have meant by *flauti d’echo*, she found a strange double-pipe instrument that led to the idea of using a pair of muted trumpets — one regular, one piccolo. (The trumpet was Neuwirth’s instrument when she was growing up.) In another identity transformation, she turns the violin, with its leading role, into a “super-flute,” originally tailored to the virtuosa and

new music champion Claire Chase. The part, which calls for flute and, in the final movement, bass flute, involves a repertoire of unusual tone productions, attacks, and even jet whistling.

Neuwirth also transforms the soundscape of the continuo, whose function in Bach is to provide harmonic scaffolding. Intrigued by a phrase (attributed to the French writer Colette) that Bach sounds like “a celestial sewing machine,” she makes the harpsichord into a multiple-personality small band of its own comprising a subtly amplified, classic Olivetti Lettera 22 typewriter, a reception bell, a water-filled glass, a mechanical milk frother, and a synthesizer.

These “modern mechanicals” in turn are evoked by the Dadaist subtitle (worthy of Ligeti), a “ballet in the form of a machine.” *Aello*, by contrast, is a mythic-poetic allusion to one of the three ancient Greek

Harpies associated with storms, who would torment victims while leading them to the Underworld. That, however, is her reputation from a biased male perspective. In Neuwirth’s view, *Aello* is “someone sent by the gods to restore peace, if necessary with force, and to exact punishment for crimes.” Similarly, the “macho” persona of Baroque trumpets is tamed and Dada-fied through muting. The entire ensemble and trio of soloists, meanwhile, are tuned to four different pitches.

While echoes of the Bach source clearly emerge, they do so in the way dreams are recalled. What may sound at one point like carnivalesque parody suddenly swerves into the “celestial” and mysterious — and the uncanny. The flute-goddess walks a tightrope, leading us along a path that touches on childhood memories, cultural ambiguity, and fresh-eyed wonder.

—THOMAS MAY

Saturday, June 13, 2020 | 7:30pm

Libbey Bowl

WOLFGANG AMADEUS MOZART **Serenade in B-flat Major, K. 361/370a (“Gran Partita”)**

- I. Largo. Molto Allegro
- II. Menuetto
- III. Adagio. Andante
- IV. Menuetto. Allegretto
- V. Romance. Adagio
- VI. Tema con variazioni. Andante
- VII. Finale. Molto Allegro

Members of the Los Angeles Philharmonic

PIERRE BOULEZ

sur Incises

Ensemble intercontemporain (EIC)

Festival artists’ bios and music playlists available at OjaiFestival.org

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart (1756-1791)

Serenade in B-flat Major, K. 361/370a “Gran Partita” (c. 1782)

Pierre Boulez (1925-2016)

sur Incises (1995-98)

A Twitch Upon the Thread

Paths, cycles, labyrinths: the geometries traced by a composition shape our experience of the music that is expressed moment by moment. The linear pattern of beginning, middle, and end — otherwise construed as exposition, adventure, reprise with a coda — found favor with the Viennese Classical mindset of Mozart and his peers.

For Pierre Boulez, the quest for perfection led him to continually revise, to consider multiple points of entry, expanding an idea into labyrinthine complexity with no definable end. As he once observed: “The most tempting situation is to create a labyrinth from another labyrinth, to superimpose one’s own labyrinth on the labyrinth of the composer.”

The way through a labyrinth is to continually adapt to its shifting perspectives, as in any confrontation of the present with the past. The labyrinth is proliferation, so that no single point of view can be central. Ariadne’s thread continues to unspool, never running out.

Something of this urge to see what lies around the corner seems to motivate Mozart’s continual return to the finished forms that attracted him most: instrumentally, the many symphonies,

concertos, quartets. Above all in his final decade, each fresh foray into a given genre is unique, implying a kind of commentary on what preceded it.

The same thing happens in the Serenade in B-flat Major, though in this case its predecessors belong to a messy category — alongside divertimentos, cassations, and the like — mostly associated with the business of entertainment. The nickname “Gran Partita” (actually misspelled “Gran Partitta” on the manuscript, where it was clearly added by a hand other than the composer’s) represents just one of several interesting puzzles about the work. It predates the work catalogue Mozart began keeping in 1784, though the only record of its performance comes from that year, when his clarinetist friend Anton Stadler joined a dozen other musicians to play four of the serenade’s seven movements. (The actual year of composition has been the topic of fascinating musicological sleuthing, with 1782 proposed as a plausible though not conclusive date.)

Mozart’s youthful serenades from his Salzburg years were clearly written as occasional pieces — for weddings or other notable public ceremonies. In

that respect, the “Gran Partita” invokes characteristics of the Salzburg serenade. Biographer Maynard Solomon describes the image this prototype conjures as one of “plenitude, springing from an overflowing abundance of unsullied idealism as yet untouched by any hints of morbidity, cynicism, or disillusionment ... imbued with an innocent utopianism, a faith in perfectibility, beauty, and sensual fulfillment.”

By the time he resettled in Vienna for a riskier but more liberated way of life as a freelance artist, Mozart turned his focus to the more formally sophisticated demands of other genres. Yet he returned on several occasions to the serenade and with K. 361/370a created one of the most stirringly beautiful and texturally adventurous works of his entire career.

Mozart wrote it as a chamber wind serenade but with an unusual luxuriance of clarinets and the odd addition of a string instrument. (The scoring is for pairs of oboes, clarinets, basset horns — a kind of clarinet with a deeper register — and bassoons, along with a horn quartet and a single double bass).

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A TWITCH UPON THE THREAD

This is the last of Mozart’s wind serenades and weaves symphonic aspects into the breezier, more fancy-free genre of the past — much as the earlier serenade style persists in certain movements of the later instrumental music and even in moments of the late operas, as Solomon observes, “wherever [Mozart] seeks to represent currents of nostalgia, elegy, and longing by employing what [has been referred to as] ‘the artifacts of *temps perdu*.’”

Something of that longing inspired the unforgettable scene in the 1984 film *Amadeus*, when Salieri first encounters the music of Mozart as he listens with mingled awe and envy to the third-movement Adagio: “This was a music I’d never heard. Filled with such longing, such unfulfillable longing, it had me trembling. It seemed to me that I was hearing a voice of God.”

sur Incises — written specifically for the musicians of EIC — similarly occupies a lofty position in the Boulez canon. A prime exemplar of the composer’s labyrinthine creativity, it proliferated from a brief, occasional work: *Incises* for solo piano, which was written for the contestants in the 1994 Umberto Micheli Piano Competition in Milan. Boulez defined “Incise” as “a rhythmic unit of several notes analogous to a motif.” In 1996 he expanded to *Incises* as a birthday gift for the music patron Paul Sacher’s 90th birthday. The labyrinth is never linear: in

fact, *Incises* itself adapted a musical idea spelling Sacher’s name (as transcribed into the notes E-flat—A—C—B—E—D), which Boulez had introduced in *Messagesquise* for his 70th birthday in 1976.

sur Incises went through various expansions and revisions into the vast, scintillating structure we hear for an ensemble of nine musicians. The composer continued to refer to it as a “work-in-progress.”

The number three plays a determinative role, beginning with three groups of three players each: three pianos, three harps, and three percussionists playing tuned instruments. Boulez initially had in mind “a kind of piano concerto” for Maurizio Pollini “although without reference to the traditional form,” he recalled. Stravinsky’s use of four percussive pianos in *Les noces* was among his sonic models.

A good deal of the work’s fascination lies in Boulez’s endlessly inventive combinations and juxtapositions of texture. The instrumental cast of characters dramatizes a kind of deconstruction of the piano as sound-producing object, which is then “reassembled,” as the musicologist Wolfgang Fink observes: “the harps represent the piano strings, while the resonators of the bells, vibraphone, and marimba represent its soundboard”

and the steel drums evoke “a prepared piano.” Boulez also uses strategic spatial positioning of the players to highlight the shifting textures: as the music ricochets between groups, “you see what you hear.”

The percussion instruments and harps, explains the composer, “are at times completely integrated and sometimes play only a minor role.” In one section, “the pianos play an elaborate ostinato passage, thus a very strict compositional structural form while the percussionists simultaneously play very free figures. But you also find moments when this role play is divided up, such that one piano and one percussionist play the free structures while the other pianos and percussionists must follow the strict ostinato movement ... Another attractive aspect is that at times you encounter very quick changes followed by sections of continuous instrumental combinations.”

Wanting to do away with “the idea of compartments in a work,” Boulez refers to the example of Proust, “where you find that the narration is continuous.” Even though Proust’s great novel is divided into chapters, “the work has to be read in one go. That is one of my main goals in music (for large works). I don’t want any breaks in the music, but you can introduce new ideas and abandon some other ideas, like the characters in a novel.”

—THOMAS MAY

“

“We often talk about good memories in Ojai. We hope we can visit the town, listen to the music festival, and see our favorite people in Ojai again!”

—MIHO AND JOSHUA SAKON

”

Sunday, June 14, 2020 | 8:30am

Libbey Bowl

MATTHIAS PINTSCHER

4° quartetto d'archi ("Ritratto di Gesualdo")

Calder Quartet

Benjamin Jacobson *violin*

Tereza Stanislav *violin*

Jonathan Moerschel *viola*

Eric Byers *cello*

SALVATORE SCIARRINO

Gesualdo senza parole (a 400 anni dalla morte)

I. Libro III: XI. "Non t'amo"

II. Libro XIV: XI. "Sparge la morte"

III. Libro VI: I. "Se la mia morte brami"

IV. Libro VI: II. "Beltà poi che t'assenti"

Ensemble intercontemporain (EIC)

Matthias Pintscher *conductor*

J.S. BACH

Contrapunctus Nos. 1, 3, 4, and 9 from *The Art of Fugue*, BWV 1080

Calder Quartet

PIERRE BOULEZ

Mémoriale (...explosante-fixe... Originel)

EIC

Matthias Pintscher *conductor*

Festival artists' bios and music playlists available at OjaiFestival.org

Matthias Pintscher (b.1971)

4° quartetto d'archi ("Ritratto di Gesualdo") (1992)

Salvatore Sciarrino (b.1947)

Gesualdo senza parole (a 400 anni dalla morte) (2013)

J.S. Bach (1685-1750)

Contrapunctus Nos. 1, 3, 4, and 9 from *The Art of Fugue*, BWV 1080 (1740s)

Pierre Boulez (1925-2016)

Mémoriale (...explosante-fixe... Originel) (1985)

Counterpoints and Memorials

During uncertain times, "zero hour" thinking becomes especially tempting. The impulse to wipe the slate clean and start over from scratch can take the form of Cartesian doubt — Philip Glass subtracting his way down to the most fundamental elements of music — or it can be wrapped in Oedipal fantasies of slaying the father. Pierre Boulez attacked one of the icons of Modernism in "Schoenberg est mort," his obituary-as-polemic, and later rhetorically declared that the great opera houses should be destroyed.

But building bridges to the past can be as radical as burning them. Echoes that re-emerged after centuries of oblivion became recognized as "music of the future" with the rediscovery of Carlo Gesualdo (1566-1613) by such figures as Stravinsky. The intersection of scandalous crime with a profoundly original musical voice in the case of Gesualdo continues to exert its eerie fascination. Notorious to his contemporaries for murdering his first wife and her adulterous lover in 1590, Gesualdo, also known as the Prince of Venosa, later retreated to his castle in the countryside outside Naples — with impunity, a privilege of his aristocratic status. There he continued to compose madrigals and sacred music whose intense

chromaticism brings to mind the wildest, most contorted images of Mannerist painters.

Gesualdo's destabilizing harmonies and depictions of melancholic extremes of pain represent his musical penance — as the myth at least would have it. His story has resonated widely among modern and contemporary artists. "These strange products of a Counter-Reformation psychosis working upon a late medieval art form," as Aldous Huxley describes his music in *The Doors of Perception*, also provide "a kind of bridge back to the human world ... At least you aren't lulled into a sense of false security by some merely human, merely fabricated order."

In 1995, the year the filmmaker Werner Herzog released his fictive "documentary" on Gesualdo, *Death for Five Voices*, Matthias Pintscher's *4° quartetto d'archi* ("Ritratto di Gesualdo" ["Portrait of Gesualdo"]) was given its premiere by the Auryn Quartet. Then in his early 20s, the young artist had increasingly taken to composing during his studies as a conductor. He wrote his Fourth String Quartet in 1992 as "both a musical psychogram and a metamorphosis" of

the music of Gesualdo, turning to a piece from Book III of his madrigals (published in 1595): *Sospirava il mio core* ("My Heart Sighed").

Pintscher's response, from near the beginning of his compositional career, makes for intriguing contrasts and comparisons with the subtly gestural musical voice he has developed in his other works that would have been heard on this summer's program. The poem's images of sighs elicit Gesualdo's characteristically sensitive, almost over-reactive, word painting, which Pintscher in turn stretches to new extremes — "to the point of showing where ardent expectation turns into obscurity and aloofness," as the composer puts it. "The music draws its tension from states of flamboyant ecstasy and all-consuming stupefaction, which occur in close succession." Pintscher manipulates the source material through techniques that intensify, prolong, or isolate ideas in Gesualdo's score.

Salvatore Sciarrino has interacted with the legacy of his late Renaissance compatriot in a constellation of works, starting with the preparations for his 1998 opera *Luci mie traditrici* ("Oh My Deceitful Eyes").

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COUNTERPOINTS AND MEMORIALS

When he learned that Russian composer Alfred Schnittke was also working on a Gesualdo-inspired opera — the Prince of Venosa haunts several music theater works of the past two decades — Sciarrino substituted a similarly salacious love-murder scenario from the same period. But he has remained spellbound by Gesualdo’s musical language, by how he foreshadows a future that came to be without any direct links back to him.

Gesualdo senza parole (“Gesualdo Without Words”) was composed for the Freiburg-based ensemble recherche in 2013 to mark the 400th anniversary of Gesualdo’s death. Sciarrino made a kind of suite from his purely instrumental versions of four madrigals (one each from Books III and IV and two from Book VI, which was published in 1611). These go beyond the category of “arrangements,” and they involve more than a subjective re-interpretation of Gesualdo’s music by his 21st-century successor. Sciarrino observes that his concept of transcription resembles the “revelation of a new virtual

face” instead of enhancing the status of “a relic.” Gesualdo’s visionary music of pain and ecstasy is filtered by a contemporary sensibility, but its strangeness and mystery are not familiarized.

With the minutest precision and attention to the fragility of his soundscapes, Sciarrino deploys his ensemble of three winds, three strings, and percussion — according a prominent role to an enlarged marimba (marimbone) — in countless surprising ways. The effect is of a seance, or perhaps an act of musical ventriloquism, as Gesualdo appears to speak the language of late Beethoven, of Romantic lieder, or of the avant-garde Sicilian Sciarrino himself. Most startling is the last madrigal, *Beltà poi che t’assenti* (“Beauty, Since You Have Consented”), whose unmoored, chromatic sidesteps would be at home in the score of *Tristan und Isolde*. Stravinsky also incorporated this source into his ballet *Monumentum pro Gesualdo* commemorating the composer’s 400th birthday.

This stunning simultaneity of voices and eras might be seen as an elaboration of the art of counterpoint — the musical miracle that allows multiple voices to be heard without the domination of one. What might seem doomed to chaotic entropy becomes glorious architecture, nowhere more so brilliantly than in J.S. Bach’s final summa, *The Art of Fugue*. Advancing on such similarly encyclopedic projects as the two books of *The Well-Tempered Clavier* and *The Musical Offering*, *The Art of Fugue*, which Bach began in 1742 and worked on up until his death eight years later, spans the universe of counterpoint as it was known at the time: from its origins in simple imitation and canon to levels of dazzling super-complexity.

The formal discipline of “fugueing” already seemed “old-fashioned” to his peers, but Bach’s mastery of counterpoint has repeatedly spurred his successors on to make unprecedented breakthroughs in their own art. Bach’s manuscript score

uses the Latin term “Contrapunctus” for the compendium’s sequence of 13 completed fugues (unaccompanied by preludes, as they are in the *WTC*). These arrangements for string quartet — Bach’s score specifies no instrumentation but was likely intended for the harpsichord — include excerpts from Sections One (Nos. 1, 3, and 4) and Three (No. 9). *The Art of Fugue* proceeds in order of increasing complexity, all the while treating the same D minor theme. No. 1 presents a paradigmatic four-voice fugue on the theme, while No. 3 and the considerably longer No. 4 flip the theme on its back (an “inversion”). In No. 9, Bach combines the theme with an impetuous new theme in a form of counterpoint classified as a double fugue. However fascinating his thematic transformations, the interstices and counter-themes that bridge the way exhibit a remarkable art of transition alongside the art of fugue.

Intended as the capstone to this magnificent edifice, the final piece (Contrapunctus No. 14) was envisioned as a quadruple fugue (on four themes, the last being a coded signature

corresponding to B-A-C-H) but was left incomplete upon the composer’s death. This ramification in the direction of increasing complexity is a hallmark of Pierre Boulez’s oeuvre. *Mémoriale* belongs to a group of works the French composer derived from a two-page score he published in *Tempo* magazine as a tribute to Stravinsky following the latter’s death in 1971. Originally published as ... *explosante-fixe* ... but without instrumentation, Boulez experimented with acoustic and electronic mixtures in several later elaborations, eventually arriving at the large-scale work of that title for solo midi flute and ensemble in the 1990s.

Mémoriale grew from the solo flute part that made up the section titled *Originel* in Boulez’s first working-out of the abstract *Tempo* source. Scored for solo flute and an octet of two horns, three violins, two violas, and cello, it expands with tremendous refinement on a core seven-note figure (Eb-G-D-Ab-Bb-A-E) in as many sections, gravitating toward Eb (standing for Stravinsky’s initial, “S,” in the German convention of pitch nomenclature). “Over the course of

the piece,” writes the Boulez authority Jonathan Goldman, “the gulf between the pure sound of the horns and the veiled sound of the fluttering flute is traversed, and the difference in the two sonorities, on the acoustic level, is bridged.”

Written in 1985, *Mémoriale* involves an additional layer of commemoration, as Boulez dedicated it to the young principal flutist of the Ensemble intercontemporain, the Canadian Larry Beaugregard, who had recently died at the age of 28. Further connecting the chain of “memorials” is the fact that Stravinsky had commemorated Debussy — who himself used the flute to invoke his *Prélude à l’après-midi d’un faune*, which Boulez regarded as the “origin” of modern music. But Stravinsky’s tribute sounds “extremely different” from Debussy’s musical universe. Similarly, *Mémoriale* is an homage whose hints of the musical past (Stravinsky, Varèse, Messiaen) are subliminal. From this palimpsest of memories emerges the unmistakable voice of Boulez.

—THOMAS MAY

Sunday, June 14, 2020 | 11:00am

Libbey Bowl

EDGARD VARÈSE

Octandre

I. Assez lent
II. Très vif et nerveux
III. Grave-Animé et jubilatoire

Ensemble intercontemporain (EIC)

FRANK ZAPPA

The Perfect Stranger 🎧

EIC

Matthias Pintscher *conductor*

GUSTAV MAHLER

Das Lied von der Erde (arr. Glenn Cortese)

Das Trinklied vom Jammer der Erde (“The Drinking Song of Earth’s Sorrow”)

Der Einsame im Herbst (“The Solitary One in Autumn”)

Von der Jugend (“Of Youth”)

Von der Schönheit (“Of Beauty”)

Der Trunkene im Frühling (“The Drunkard in Spring”)

Der Abschied (“The Farewell”)

Tamara Mumford *mezzo-soprano*

Andrew Staples *tenor*

EIC

Matthias Pintscher *conductor*

Festival artists’ bios and music playlists available at OjaiFestival.org

Edgard Varèse (1883-1965)

Octandre (1923)

Frank Zappa (1940-1993)

The Perfect Stranger 🎧 (1982)

Gustav Mahler (arr. Glenn Cortese) (1860-1911)

Das Lied von der Erde (1908-09; this arrangement: 2006)

Strange Familiarities

The urge to look to Europe for validation is a recurring thread in American art. Yet already by the turn of the last century, the gaze was being returned with a special fervor of its own. Dvořák’s “Symphony from the New World” ranks among the most famous examples. Late in 1907, Gustav Mahler set sail for New York, which could become home base for most of his final three years. Mahler had just been confronted by a series of overwhelming crises. America beckoned with the promise of new beginnings.

Edgard Varèse would within less than a decade trace a path similar to Mahler’s. Still back in Europe, the ambitious young composer even met with Mahler in 1909 to ask for his support. The older master was sufficiently impressed to write a letter to a Vienna colleague, in which he suggested that the young Frenchman “will interest you greatly.”

Fast forward to mid-century, when the self-taught Frank Zappa — then a high school student in San Diego — was feeding his insatiable musical curiosity with a fusion of blues, early rock and roll, and European modernism, including whatever music of Varèse he could get his hands on. Zappa’s ongoing fascination with the avant-garde eventually led to his embrace by Pierre Boulez and, near the

end of his too-short life, by the Frankfurt-based Ensemble Modern (which gave a long-overdue performance of Zappa’s final project, *The Yellow Shark*, at the 2010 Ojai Festival).

The trajectory between Old and New Worlds was never a simply linear one. Varèse left Europe for New York during the chaos of the First World War and became a dynamo in the new music scene. The title *Amériques* (completed in 1921 but not premiered until 1926) — his first major work since coming to America — hints at the abundance of his impressions of New York as an exhilarating symphony of street noises, sirens, foghorns, and construction projects.

Varèse, declared John Cage, “fathered forth noise into 20th-century music,” and Boulez also became a major advocate. But not even the radical *Amériques* exiled all thoughts of Europe, to which the composer returned for a period starting in 1928. Allusions to Debussy and the Stravinsky of *The Rite of Spring* abound in this score. Varèse composed *Octandre* two years later, in 1923 — the year in which Stravinsky’s Octet announced a different kind of revolution in the unfolding saga of Modernism: the “anachronistic” reclamation of idioms from the past. Varèse, for his part, alludes to the serenade tradition of Mozart but

adds unusual instrumentation to the mix (including a single string, double bass — an instrument Mozart himself included in his “Gran Partita” Serenade).

But this is a far cry from Stravinskian neoclassicism, even though *Octandre* stands apart from Varèse’s body of work as the only piece he divides into discrete movements. Solos from different instruments initiate each of these (oboe, piccolo, and bassoon, respectively). And though this is the only piece Varèse scored without percussion, *Octandre* displays his signature focus on sonic color as the true source of musical interest — even in the counterpoint of the “animated and jubilant” final section. The number eight — the botanical title refers to flowers that have eight stamens — is also determinative.

Controversially, Boulez limited the repertoire of American composers he conducted; he made full-length recordings of the music of only two: Elliott Carter and Frank Zappa. Even during the experiment-happy golden age of rock, Zappa stood out with his flair for innovation and what he termed “electrical chamber music.” He credited Boulez as one of his influences on the cover of *Freak Out!* — his debut album from 1966

CONTINUED ►►

Listening to *Das Lied von der Erde*

The tempestuous life force dominates in "Das Trinklied vom Jammer der Erde" ("The Drinking Song of Earth's Sorrow"). Each return of the tenor refrain is pitched higher. After the horn's opening call, the upper strings play a three-note motif that is the germ cell of the whole cycle (A-G-E). A sparer soundscape, in which the oboe has a prominent role, is unfolded in "Der Einsame im Herbst" ("The Solitary One in Autumn").

The biographer Jens Malte Fischer compares the next three songs — the Impressionist "Von der Jugend" ("Youth"), "Von der Schönheit" ("Beauty"), and "Der Trunkene im Frühling" ("The Drunkard in Spring") — to the composer's earlier lieder "in terms of their character and length."

"Der Abschied" ("The Farewell") is divided into three sections and includes a vast orchestral interlude before the final section. Nearly as long as all that has come before, "Der Abschied" is the most symphonic of the six movements in style and scope. Here, for the first time in his work, Mahler introduces the sound of the celesta: "The dear earth everywhere/ blossoms in spring and grows green anew!/Everywhere and forever blue is the horizon!/ Forever ... Forever ..."

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STRANGE FAMILIARITIES

with the Mothers of Invention. From his side, Boulez remarked that he found Zappa "extremely sympathetic and interesting" when they met in the early 1980s. Boulez invited him to compose for his Ensemble intercontemporain. The result was *The Perfect Stranger*, one of three tracks that appear on the 1984 album *Boulez Conducts Zappa: The Perfect Stranger* (the other two being *Naval Aviation in Art?* and *Dupree's Paradise*).

Zappa's note for *The Perfect Stranger* is as follows:

A door-to-door salesman, accompanied by his faithful gypsy-mutant industrial vacuum cleaner (as per the interior illustration on the *Chunga's Revenge* album cover), cavorts licentiously with a slovenly housewife.

We hear the door bell, the housewife's eyebrows going up and down as she spies the nozzle through the ruffled curtain, the sound of the little bag of "demonstration dirt" being sprinkled on the rug, and assorted bombastic interjections representing the spiritual qualities of chrome, rubber, electricity, and household tidiness. The entire transaction is being viewed from a safe distance by Patricia, the dog in the highchair.

Das Lied von der Erde ("The Song of the Earth") makes a radical shift in perspective for Mahler toward the East — even if this is an East delimited by contemporary Western appropriation. It inaugurates the first in a final trilogy of works (including the Ninth and Tenth Symphonies) that address last things and the condition of impermanence. *Das Lied* is often described as the composer's strategy to circumvent the "curse of the ninth" and cheat death soon after he had been made aware of his own serious heart disease. But it also arguably contains the opera he never wrote: Yuval Sharon's collaborative digital staging with the Los Angeles Philharmonic two years ago posited a hidden narrative of lovers facing a final separation.

The immediate source for these texts is *Die chinesische Flöte* ("The Chinese Flute"), a recently published anthology poems attributed to the classical T'ang Dynasty poets Bai/Li Bo (701-761), Qian Qi (710-782), Meng Haoran (c. 689-740), and Wang Wei (699-759). But the connection to these sources is tenuous: all of the poems were translated by a German poet, Hans Bethge, who himself knew no Chinese but had worked from secondary sources. Mahler chose seven of the poems, two of which are linked together in "Der Abschied"; he also altered a few lines to suit his purpose. In short: these texts are filtered through a fin-de-siècle European lens.

Mahler never had a chance to hear his meditations on finality: *Das Lied* was first performed some six months after his death in 1911. The leave-taking is all the more poignant in that *Das Lied* is infused with acute, poignant awareness of life's joys as well — above all, of love. Musically, the complex chromaticism of Mahler's style here gives way to the restraint of an Eastern pentatonic scale. At the same time, his exquisite blends and timbral contrasts mark a new phase in this masterful orchestrator's ability to "create an entire world" by building soundscapes. The score's moments of chamber-like intimacy, a feature of the original for large orchestra, are all the more arresting in this arrangement by Glen Cortese. Mahler considered his own version of *Das Lied* for piano and voices to be equally valid

vis-a-vis the full orchestral score. Mahler's Eighth Symphony had marked the first time he used the human voice throughout. That work's longest section sets the final scene of Goethe's *Faust*, a *locus classicus* of the Western worldview of striving individualism. When he took up *Das Lied* two years later, in the summer of 1908, it was from a drastically changed perspective. Mahler poured out his anguish in a letter to one of his protégés, Bruno Walter: "I have lost any calm and peace of mind I ever achieved. I confront nothingness, and now, at the end of my life, must learn again to walk and stand." *Das Lied von der Erde* ("The Song of the Earth") was crucial in Mahler's process of learning to be reborn. He judged it to be "the most personal thing I have yet created."

—THOMAS MAY

Sunday, June 14, 2020 | 4:30pm

Libbey Bowl

A Concert for Ojai

GABRIELA ORTIZ

Lío de 4

ANGÉLICA NEGRÓN

Triste Silencio Programático

Calder Quartet

Benjamin Jacobson *violin*

Tereza Stanislav *violin*

Jonathan Moerschel *viola*

Eric Byers *cello*

STEVE REICH

Drumming

Joseph Pereira, Steve Reich and Percussion All Stars

Festival artists' bios and music playlists available at OjaiFestival.org

Gabriela Ortiz (b. 1964)

Lío de 4 (2017)

Angélica Negrón (b. 1981)

Triste Silencio Programático (2002)

Steve Reich (b. 1936)

Drumming (1971)

A Concert for Ojai: Pulses and Patterns

The 2020 Ojai Music Festival programs designed by Matthias Pintscher have alluded to numerous threads and connections, bridges and transitions — all resulting in the enticingly varied menu of today's scene. We've encountered a mixture of leading European and American composers, reflected on Pierre Boulez and his ties to the natural setting of Ojai, and sampled from the legacy of figures from the post-Boulez generation like Olga Neuwirth, Unsuk Chin, and Pintscher himself. The music of Steve Reich completes this summer of creative juxtapositions — and fills in a missing link between the realms of European and American musical innovation.

But first, we turn to a pair of pieces by two other contemporary composers to start off this Concert for Ojai. Based in her native Mexico City, where she grew up in a family devoted to the traditions of Mexican folk music, Gabriela Ortiz explores intersections between the realms of avant-garde, jazz, and folk. Her opera *Camelia La Tejana: Only the Truth* was presented by Long Beach Opera in 2013. Written to celebrate the 30th anniversary of the Cuarteto Latinoamericano, *Lío de 4* is a brief and playful piece that focuses on the potential of rhythmic elegance and vitality.

A generation younger and a native of Puerto Rico, Brooklyn-based Angélica Negrón is a composer and multi-instrumentalist who has received accolades for her idiosyncratic use of toys, electronics, and robotic instruments. One of her current projects, for National Sawdust, is *Chimera*, a work-in-progress she describes as "a lip sync opera for drag queen performers and chamber ensemble exploring the ideas of fantasy and illusion as well as the intricacies and complexities of identity."

Triste Silencio Programático (2002) is one of Negrón's first compositions and was inspired by the 1920 silent film *The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari* as well as by the aesthetic of German Expressionist cinema. Directed by Robert Wiene and written by Hans Janowitz and Carl Mayer, *Dr. Caligari* involves "an insane hypnotist [who] uses a somnambulist to commit a series of crimes," the composer explains. "At that time, I played violin and Celtic harp in a band called Sinesthesia and one of our earliest gigs was to compose and perform a live score to go along with this film."

Triste Silencio Programático draws on some of the themes she wrote for this score. "The first movement focuses on the dark mood of the film as well as the visual style with its unusual angles and distorted sets," writes Negrón. "The

second movement examines the dramatic contrast between light and shadow, while the third movement explores the destabilized characters and their inner mind with their complex psychological states. *Triste Silencio Programático* is a piece of music in black and white."

It was during the 1966 Summer Festival (programmed by Ingolf Dahl) that Steve Reich's music made its Ojai debut: Michael Tilson Thomas played his *Two Fugues for Piano*. By an ironic coincidence, Boulez paid his first visit to Ojai that same year. His inaugural season as music director followed in 1967, and Boulez would return over the span of nearly four decades as music director at Ojai more often than any other artist. Yet he had a blind spot for major contemporary American composers. Dismissive of Minimalism in general, he never programmed any Reich. Yet the Ensemble intercontemporain, founded by Boulez himself, would later commission Reich and won his admiration for its precision perfection in interpreting his music.

Completed in 1971 after a year of work, *Drumming* is one of the acknowledged early masterpieces of Minimalism and a pivotal work in Reich's development. On the surface, it must have seemed far

CONTINUED ►►

Phase Music

In the mid-1960s, Reich experimented with material he taped from an African American San Francisco street preacher named Brother Walter. He lined up identical loops taped live from Brother Walter's fire-and-brimstone speech-song commentary on Noah and the Flood and played them back on two cheap machines. By accident, the machines grew slightly out of sync with each other as they continued playing from the same starting point. This overlapping echo created fascinating rhythmic patterns in which the identical strands slowly separated as they went out of phase and then came together again in cycles. By manipulating the phasing — multiplying the individual strands and so forth — Reich found that he could build a dense web that acquires a hallucinatory quality as it lifts the listener outside ordinary time.

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A CONCERT FOR OJAI: PULSES AND PATTERNS

removed from the concerns of Boulez and his fellow avant-gardists in Western Europe — with the exception of György Ligeti. Reich once referred to Ligeti as “the European composer who has best understood both American and non-Western music.”

Reich's teenage love of jazz — in particular, Kenny Clark's artists with the Modern Jazz Quartet — led him to take up percussion and form his own band. In 1970, a few years after his breakthrough experiment with phase music [see sidebar], Reich traveled to Ghana to study the indigenous drumming traditions of the Ewe people. Ligeti would follow his lead in the next decade, similarly drawing inspiration from African sources.

Through close study with a master drummer of the Ewe tribe in Accra and his daily recording of lessons, Reich familiarized himself with the patterns and structures of African drumming. The most important influence of his stay in Africa, according to the composer, is that “it confirmed my intuition that acoustic instruments could be used to produce music that was genuinely richer in sound than that produced with electronic instruments.” Upon his return to the United States, he composed *Drumming*, which was premiered by the Steve Reich Ensemble at the Museum of Modern Art (in the film theater) in New York City in 1971.

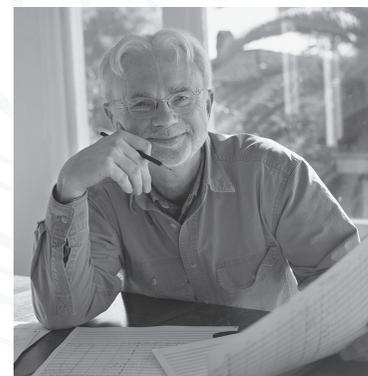
Depending on the number of repeats that are played in performance, *Drumming* lasts between 55 and 75 minutes and is Reich's longest composition. His unusual scoring calls for four tuned bongo drums, three marimbas, three glockenspiels, and piccolo, plus an alto and a soprano; whistling is also part of the soundscape, contributed by one of the singers or a percussionist. Reich recalls that the long decay of the marimba is what suggested the idea of incorporating women's voices, which sing the “sub-patterns” that result acoustically from this resonance. He also compares the vocal patterns to Ella Fitzgerald's style of scat singing, which he listened to often while exploring jazz in his early years. A similar process results in the whistling and piccolo patterns in the glockenspiel and final ensemble sections.

Notice the absence of bass instruments — in fact, the first three parts of the four-part work spiral successively upward in timbre until all of the forces join together in the fourth and final part. The whole work is shaped from a single core pattern. As Reich describes it: “*Drumming* begins with two drummers building up the basic rhythmic pattern of the entire piece from a single drum beat, played in a cycle of twelve beats with rests on all the other beats. Gradually, additional drumbeats are substituted for the rests, one at a time, until the pattern is completed. The reduction process is simply the reverse, where rests are gradually substituted for the beats, one at a time, until only a section leads to a build-up for the drums, marimbas, and glockenspiels simultaneously.”

—THOMAS MAY

Festival: Future Forward

Let me add my voice of thanks to all of you for your continued support and your passionate engagement with the Ojai Music Festival. I have been so touched to read the various messages of support and understanding from many of you about your own devotion to the Festival, made more pronounced by its absence this year. This time of separation reminds us vividly of the people and experiences we cherish the most. My own experiences at Ojai are among the most precious memories, so I am so grateful and full of joy to be taking on the role of Artistic Director, beginning next month.



A few weeks ago, I had the most wonderful phone conversation (yes, just plain phone, no Zoom!) with our 2021 Music Director, John Adams from his home in Berkeley, CA. We opened that magical door that unlocks when you have a destination as creative and as welcoming of adventure as the Ojai Music Festival. We quickly began trading ideas of artists, composers, events, individual

works, and suddenly a festival began to take shape out of the air. Given this season of disappointment and postponement in the world of the performing arts, talking with John was like breathing oxygen again.

Next year, we celebrate our milestone 75th Ojai Festival. John has always been one to face forward, to seek new voices and new avenues of music. John's career is full of extraordinary era-defining works but his musical curiosity and sense of adventure keep him looking ahead. Although we both have huge reverence for the Festival's history, John is eager to turn to a new generation in this newest incarnation of this Festival we both love. This festival will have a distinctly American voice, with a particular rooting in California as is only fitting for such an anniversary. We come home to Ojai.

The focus will be on a number of brilliant young composers who are bringing such fresh new ideas and expression to American music, joined by a roster of vibrant artists and ensembles. My favorite experiences at Ojai have been those of discovery, to encounter artists and works that I didn't yet know I loved. I can promise you many happy discoveries as well as works of such central figures of our time as Philip Glass, Louis Andriessen, Laurie Anderson, and Steve Reich. We will not neglect the Ojai tradition of unexpected and fresh juxtapositions of older works, such as happens when Debussy meets Rameau, just to cite one example.

And let me just extend our horizon one year further to the 2022 Festival, when our Music Director will be the collective AMOC (American Modern Opera Company), which is anything but an opera company but rather a cooperative among some of the most gifted artists to emerge in recent times. It is led by composer Matthew Aucoin, whose *Eurydice* had a notable success at LA Opera recently, and director/choreographer Zack Winokur; the company includes such favorite Ojai alum as soprano Julia Bullock, cellist Jay Campbell, and bass-baritone Davóne Tines.

The Ojai Festival lives! And we will continue to thrive with your help. Join us virtually as we honor the spirit of the 2020 Festival with newly created programming online. And then it's only a matter of time until we gather again in Libbey Park, the surrounding mountains turn bewitchingly pink for a fleeting moment, the lights come up on stage, and the 2021 Festival brings us all together.

—ARA GUZELIMIAN
Artistic Director Designate

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THANK YOU! In the midst of these unsettling times, we have a chance to reaffirm what is important in our lives. Our loved ones. Our health. Our communities. **And yes, powerful, innovative music.** Ojai Music Festival donors supported planning for the 2020 Festival which could not be realized due to the worldwide pandemic, a pivot to online performance archives and education programming through the spring and summer, and future planning for the 75th Festival in June 2021. Your steadfast support has safeguarded musical creativity and adventure. We are grateful to you, our Festival Family, for your vision and commitment.

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Ojai Festivals, Ltd. Is a 501c3 non-profit tax exempt organization.



BRAVO Music Education Program A Year in Review



As a response to the COVID-19 pandemic and the Ojai Unified School District closure in the spring, the BRAVO music education program immediately “answered the call” to continue bringing quality music experiences to local Ojai students and families. In partnership with Ojai principals and teachers in the public schools, we offered online video sessions as an extension of our program for classrooms, from transitional kindergarten through third grade.

In addition, we launched online music activities, called **Song and Play Thursday**, to provide children and families a language based music program in which song, movement and interactive play promote emotional, social, cognitive, and musical development. Each week, the videos and curriculum notes are available at OjaiFestival.org.

Earlier in the year, BRAVO was able to offer our free annual **Imagine** Concert through continued collaboration with the Ojai Valley School and the Barbara Barnard Smith Fund, where more than 1,000 students and adults enjoyed music from the Sandhi Indian Ensemble to learn about world music.

The **Music Van**, staffed by a large group of dedicated volunteers, including our Ojai Festival Women's Committee, visited eight local Ojai elementary schools, and appeared at community events as the Instrument Petting Zoo. One by one, each of these more than 400 children learned by interacting with the instruments, plucking and banging away. Teachers tell us every year that many of their students are inspired to sign up to play an instrument in the following year's program at their school.

—LAURA WALTER

The BRAVO education and community program is an essential part of the Ojai Music Festival, which is committed to fostering a new generation of musicians and engaging students in the Ojai Valley. Through its free student music education workshops, internship program, symposia, and community concerts, the Festival is dedicated to providing music learning to all ages. Each year, BRAVO presents more than 500 in-school workshops and works with 2,200 public school students in the Ojai Unified School District, engages over 100 seniors and people with disabilities in five assisted living centers in the valley. Learn more about the program at www.OjaiFestival.org.

BRAVO BY THE NUMBERS

2,335 Children served
540 Workshops presented
15,160 Year-round direct experiences

INSTITUTIONAL FUNDERS

Ojai Arts Commission
 Ojai Festival Women's Committee
 John and Beverly Stauffer Foundation
 Ojai Valley School/
 Barbara Barnard Smith Fund
 Rotary Club of Ojai



“Thank you, Laura. Your smile and those cute, funny songs will make the kids so happy during these lonely days. Your music classes make my week.”

—MS. HUGHART, SECOND GRADE



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Special thanks to the countless number of Festival volunteers, who share their passion, efforts, talent, and time each year!

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OJAI MUSIC FESTIVAL

ARA GUZELIMIAN artistic director

Save-the-Dates

75th Festival

June 10-13, 2021

JOHN ADAMS music director

76th Festival

June 9-12, 2022

AMOC music director

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*"Ojai,
a Musical
Utopia."* – New York Times



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