

OJAIMUSICFESTIVAL

Rhiannon Giddens Named Music Director of 77th Ojai Music Festival: June 8 to 11, 2023

Joining composer/musician Giddens, 2023 Festival artists will include kamancheh player/composer Kayhan Kalhor, multi-instrumentalist Francesco Turrisi, pipa player Wu Man, and the Attacca Quartet



"I am so excited to get to work with the Ojai Music Festival as Music Director for 2023. My experience as a performer there last year was one of the best festival experiences I've had - I was able to sit at the crossroads of all that I am artistically and feel fully supported by Ara and the staff and audience of Ojai each time. I look forward to building on that feeling with the artists that we're bringing out next year; the future is in celebration of how we come together as humans - despite boxes, boundaries, and borders thrown up with the intent to keep us apart."
- Rhiannon Giddens, 2023 Ojai Festival Music Director

OJAI, California — May 26, 2022 — The Ojai Music Festival's Artistic and Executive Director Ara Guzelimian announces Rhiannon Giddens as the Festival's next Music Director for the 77th Festival, June 8 to 11, 2023. The initial list of guest artists for the 2023 Festival include kamancheh player/composer Kayhan Kalhor, pipa player Wu Man, as well as multi-instrumentalist Francesco Turrisi, and the Attacca Quartet, composed of violinists Amy Schroeder and Domenic Salerni, violist Nathan Schram, and cellist

Andrew Yee. Additional artists, projects, and programming for the 2023 Ojai Music Festival will be announced in the coming months.

“I am so thrilled that Rhiannon Giddens accepted my invitation to become Music Director of the 2023 Ojai Music Festival. I have boundless admiration for Rhiannon as both a compelling musician and as an extraordinary artistic catalyst bringing together musical worlds towards important philosophical, cultural, and social goals,” said Artistic and Executive Director Ara Guzelimian.

“The openness and flexibility of the Ojai Festival is an ideal forum for such an artist to have complete freedom to imagine and explore. Rhiannon created a special bond with Ojai and our audiences when she made her debut at the 2021 Festival. She and the Attacca Quartet found an immediate connection when they first met last year in Ojai, and she invited the quartet to join her for Ojai 2023, to grow and explore that partnership. Francesco Turrisi brings such boundless musical fluencies, from early music to jazz, from the traditional music of multiple cultures to new music by emerging composers. We have spoken about Rhiannon’s extraordinary embrace of so many musical languages as a thread in the 2023 Ojai Festival, with particular focus in the deep traditions of a classical music in non-Western cultures and the encounter of like-instruments from very different cultures. We are so happy that the Persian kamancheh player/composer Kayhan Kalhor and the great pipa player Wu Man will join us next June in these explorations. These plans are a work-in-progress at this early stage, and we look forward to being joined by a number of great collaborators and composers, who will be announced in the coming months.”

Kamancheh/composer Kayhan Kalhor will make his first Ojai appearances at the 2023 Festival. Pipa player Wu Man returns to Ojai for the first time since the 2015 Festival, where she partnered with then Music Director Steven Schick. Multi-instrumentalist Francesco Turrisi and the Attacca Quartet previously joined Rhiannon Giddens in Ojai during the 2021 Festival in September with Music Director John Adams.

The Festival shares this news as artists and audiences anticipate gathering in Ojai for the upcoming 76th Festival (June 9-12, 2022) with the discipline-colliding collective AMOC* (American Modern Opera Company) as Music Director. Please visit OjaiFestival.org for 2022 Festival details.

Series Passes for 2023 Ojai Music Festival

Advance 2023 series subscriptions will be available for purchase during the 2022 Festival and online at OjaiFestival.org.

Single Tickets for the June 9-12, 2022 Ojai Music Festival with Music Director AMOC* are available and may be purchased online at OjaiFestival.org or by calling (805) 646-2053. Ojai Music Festival ticket prices range from \$50 to \$150 for reserved seating, and lawn tickets are \$20. Student and group discounts are available.

Live video streaming of the 2022 Ojai Music Festival

The Ojai Music Festival continues to draw thousands of curious and engaged music enthusiasts from across the globe. Ojai offers free access to the Festival experience through live and archived video streaming online at OjaiFestival.org. This year's live streaming runs June 9-12, 2022.

RHIANNON GIDDENS, MUSIC DIRECTOR OF THE 2023 OJAI MUSIC FESTIVAL

The acclaimed musician Rhiannon Giddens uses her art to excavate the past and reveal bold truths about our present. A MacArthur "Genius Grant" recipient, Giddens co-founded the Grammy Award-winning Carolina Chocolate Drops. She most recently won a Grammy Award for Best Folk Album for *They're Calling Me Home*, and was also nominated for Best American Roots Song for "Avalon" from *They're Calling Me Home*, which she made with multi-instrumentalist Francesco Turrisi. Giddens is now a two-time winner and eight-time Grammy nominee for her work as a soloist and collaborator.

They're Calling Me Home was released by Nonesuch last April and has been widely celebrated by the NY Times, NPR Music, NPR, Rolling Stone, People, Associated Press and far beyond, with No Depression deeming it "a near perfect album...her finest work to date." Recorded over six days in the early phase of the pandemic in a small studio outside of Dublin, Ireland - where both Giddens and Turrisi live - *They're Calling Me Home* manages to effortlessly blend the music of their native and adoptive countries: America, Italy, and Ireland. The album speaks of the longing for the comfort of home as well as the metaphorical "call home" of death.

Giddens's lifelong mission is to lift people whose contributions to American musical history have previously been erased, and to work toward a more accurate understanding of the country's musical origins. Pitchfork has said of her work, "few artists are so fearless and so ravenous in their exploration," and Smithsonian Magazine calls her "an electrifying artist who brings alive the memories of forgotten predecessors, white and black."

Among her many diverse career highlights, Giddens has performed for the Obamas at the White House and received an inaugural Legacy of Americana Award from Nashville's National Museum of African American History in partnership with the Americana Music Association. Her critical acclaim includes in-depth profiles by CBS Sunday Morning, the New York Times, the New Yorker, and NPR's Fresh Air, among many others.

Giddens was featured in Ken Burns's Country Music series, which aired on PBS, where she spoke about the African American origins of country music. She is also a member of the band Our Native Daughters with three other black female banjo players, Leyla McCalla, Allison Russell, and Amythyst Kiah, and co-produced their debut album *Songs of Our Native Daughters* (2019), which tells stories of historic black womanhood and survival.

Giddens is in the midst of a tremendous 2022. She recently announced the publication of her first book, *Build a House* (October 2022), *Lucy Negro Redux*, the ballet Giddens wrote the music for, had its premiere at the Nashville Ballet (premiered in 2019 and toured in 2022), and the libretto and music for Giddens' original opera, *Omar*, based on the autobiography of the enslaved man Omar Ibn Said, premiered at the Spoleto USA Festival in May. Giddens is also curating a four-concert Perspectives series as part of Carnegie Hall's 2022–2023 season. Named Artistic Director of Silkroad Ensemble in 2020, Giddens is developing a number of new programs for that ensemble, including one inspired by the history of the American transcontinental railroad and the cultures and music of its builders.

As an actor, Giddens had a featured role on the television series *Nashville*.

ARA GUZELIMIAN, ARTISTIC AND EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Ara Guzelimian is Artistic and Executive Director of the Ojai Music Festival, having begun in that position in July 2020. The appointment culminates many years of association with the Festival, including tenures as director of the Ojai Talks and as Artistic Director 1992–97. Guzelimian stepped down as provost and dean of the Juilliard School in New York City in June 2020, having served in that position since 2007. At Juilliard, he worked closely with the president in overseeing the faculty, curriculum, and artistic planning of the distinguished performing arts conservatory in all three of its divisions: dance, drama, and music. He continues at Juilliard as Special Advisor, Office of the President.

Prior to the Juilliard appointment, he was senior director and artistic advisor of Carnegie Hall from 1998 to 2006. Guzelimian serves as artistic consultant for the Marlboro Music Festival and School in Vermont. He is a member of the steering committee of the Aga Khan Music Awards, the artistic committee of the Borletti-Buitoni Trust in London, and a board member of the Amphion and Pacific Harmony Foundations. He is also a member of the music visiting committee of the Morgan Library and Museum in New York City. In 2020, Guzelimian was appointed to the Advisory Panel of the Birgit Nilsson Foundation in Sweden.

Previously, Guzelimian held the position of artistic administrator of the Aspen Music Festival and School in Colorado, and he was long associated with the Los Angeles Philharmonic at the beginning of his career, first as producer for the orchestra's national radio broadcasts and, subsequently, as Artistic Administrator. Guzelimian is editor of *Parallels and Paradoxes: Explorations in Music and Society* (Pantheon Books, 2002), a collection of dialogues between Daniel Barenboim and Edward Said. In September 2003, he was awarded the title Chevalier des Arts et des Lettres by the French government for his contributions to French music and culture.

OJAI MUSIC FESTIVAL

The Ojai Music Festival represents an ideal of adventurous, open-minded, and open-hearted programming in the most beautiful and welcoming of settings, with audiences and artists to match its aspirations. Marking its 75th anniversary, the Festival remains a creative laboratory for thought-provoking musical experiences, bringing together innovative artists and curious audiences in an intimate, idyllic outdoor setting. Each Festival's narrative is guided by a different Music Director, whose distinctive perspectives shape programming — ensuring energized festivals year after year.

Throughout each year, the Ojai Music Festival contributes to Southern California's cultural landscape with in-person and online Festival-related programming as well as robust educational offerings that serve thousands of public-school students and seniors. The organization's apex is the world-renowned four-day Festival, which takes place in Ojai, a breathtaking valley 75 miles from Los Angeles, which is a perennial platform for the fresh and unexpected. During the immersive experience, a mingling of the most curious take part in concerts, symposia, free community events, and social gatherings. During the intimate Festival weekend, considered a highlight of the international music summer season, Ojai welcomes up to 7,000 patrons and reaches 35 times more audiences worldwide through live and on-demand streaming of concerts and discussions.

Since its founding in 1947, the Ojai Music Festival has presented broad-ranging programs in unusual ways with an eclectic mix of new and rarely performed music, as well as refreshing juxtapositions of musical styles. Through its signature structure of the Artistic Director appointing a different Music Director each year, Ojai has presented a “who’s who” of music including the multi-disciplinary colliding collective AMOC* (American Modern Opera Company) Vijay Iyer, Patricia Kopatchinskaja, and Barbara Hannigan in recent years; throughout its history, featured artists have included Aaron Copland, Igor Stravinsky, Michael Tilson Thomas, Kent Nagano, Pierre Boulez, John Adams, Esa-Pekka Salonen, Robert Spano, Pierre-Laurent Aimard, David Robertson, Eighth Blackbird, George Benjamin, Dawn Upshaw, Leif Ove Andsnes, Mark Morris, Jeremy Denk, Steven Schick, Matthias Pintscher, and Peter Sellars.

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Programs and artists are subject to change. Please check the website at OjaiFestival.org.