

OJAI MUSIC FESTIVAL

**2025 MUSIC DIRECTOR CLAIRE CHASE AND ARTISTIC DIRECTOR
ARA GUZELIMIAN ANNOUNCE INITIAL PLANS FOR
THE 79TH OJAI MUSIC FESTIVAL: JUNE 5-8, 2025**



Festival programming will include the West Coast Premieres of Liza Lim's *Sex Magic*, Craig Taborn's *Busy Griefs and Endangered Charms*, Anna Thorvaldsdottir's *Ubique*, Susie Ibarra's *Sky Islands*, and Terry Riley's *Pulsefield*

Festival celebrates multiple generations of composers, including residencies by Anna Thorvaldsdottir, Tania León, Annea Lockwood, Liza Lim, and Marcos Balter; composer-performers include Craig Taborn (piano), Leilehua Lanzilotti (viola), and Susie Ibarra (percussion)

An all-star “meta-ensemble” of Festival musicians including Seth Parker Woods, cello; Wu Wei, sheng; Steven Schick, conductor and percussion; the JACK Quartet (violinists Christopher Otto and Austin Wulliman, violist John Pickford Richards, and cellist Jay Campbell); Katinka Kleijn, cello; Cory Smythe and Alex Peh, piano and keyboards; Ross Karre, percussion; Joshua Rubin, clarinet; M.A. Tiesenga, saxophone and electronic hurdy-gurdy; and members of Australia’s ELISION Ensemble

“There’s no place in the world like Ojai, and there is no gathering of musicians and ideas like the Ojai Festival. From the time I was a kid growing up in Southern California, the Festival has taken on mythical dimensions for me.” - Claire Chase, 2025 Music Director

(OJAI CA - October 8, 2024) — The 79th Ojai Music Festival, June 5 to 8, 2025, welcomes as Music Director one of today’s most vital artists, flutist Claire Chase. Reflecting on Ojai’s natural and sonic environment, the 2025 Festival programming offers responses to landscape as caretakers and participants and welcomes a multi-generational collective of composers, performers, composer-performers, and improvisers.

Described by Chase as a kind of “meta ensemble,” Ojai’s 2025 Festival collaborators include returning artists Steven Schick, who previously served as 2015 Music Director; cellist Seth Parker Woods; the JACK Quartet comprising violinists Christopher Otto and Austin Wulliman, violist John Pickford Richards, and cellist Jay Campbell; clarinetist Joshua Rubin; percussionist Ross Karre; and composer Tania León. Ojai welcomes several artists in their first Festival appearances including Annea Lockwood, composer; Wu Wei, sheng; Marcos Balter, composer; Susie Ibarra, composer, sound artist and percussion; Katinka Kleijn, cello; Leilehua Lanzilotti, composer and viola; Liza Lim, composer; Cory Smythe and Alex Peh, keyboards; Craig Taborn, piano, electronic musician and composer/improviser; Anna Thorvaldsdottir, composer; M.A. Tiesenga, saxophone and electronic hurdy-gurdy; and members of ELISION Ensemble.

“In the spirit of collectivism and collaboration, I’m excited to invite these artists to play together in new and sometimes surprising ensemble configurations. We’ll all show up as both headliners and side acts in each other’s explorations,” commented Claire Chase.

“While shaping these programs,” writes Chase, “I was inspired by the author Donna Haraway’s invitation to encounter one another in “unexpected combinations and collaborations,” in what she calls “oddkin”—a term for our deep and unruly interdependence. What a beautiful description of the messy and miraculous experience of making music in the 21st century! The four days of the Festival will be anchored by four generations of brilliant composers whose projects—though wonderfully divergent stylistically—explore common themes of rebirth, re-imagination, reclamation, and re-wilding. Our programs will be brought to life by an exhilarating lineup of performers whose manifold musical backgrounds will meet in unpredictable and electrifying new ways. From Thursday to Sunday, we will conjure thinking forests, liberated rivers, endangered charms, ancient mythologies, holy presences, magical spells, and reimagined communities. And we will embrace multispecies collaboration in

performance experiences that extend from the newly rewilded landscapes of the Ojai Valley Land Conservancy to the feathered night choruses fluttering around Libbey Bowl. My hope is that these programs will illuminate and celebrate the fragilities as well as the exuberant possibilities of music made in oddkin. I look forward to welcoming you to the adventure!”

Artistic and Executive Director Ara Guzelimian said, “Claire Chase is one of the most vibrant generators of ideas in today’s musical life, something she does with boundless imagination and generosity of spirit. It’s been so rewarding to imagine all of Ojai’s possibilities with her. I’m particularly excited by the musical community she’s creating with the resident performers and composers, weaving them throughout in collaborations and cross-current inspirations. And being a native Californian, Claire responds deeply to the particular beauty and complexity of Ojai’s natural setting, something represented in many works that explore many distinct environments.”

The 2025 Festival opens on Thursday, June 5 with Annea Lockwood’s *bayou-borne*, an affectionate tribute to Pauline Oliveros, and culminates with Marcos Balter’s *Pan* from Chase’s epic *Density 2036* project. Balter’s already iconic *Pan* (2017-18) is an evening-length musical drama for solo flute, live electronics, and an ensemble of community musicians. The all-ages, all-abilities *Pan* ensemble—a kind of 21st-century Greek chorus that serves as the conscience of the community in this telling of the Greek myth—is assembled newly in each city to which the work travels.

Friday (June 6) begins with an early morning program featuring the JACK Quartet with works by Tania León, Leilehua Lanziliotti, and two exciting emerging composers, Vicente Atria and Eduardo Aguilar. The Libbey Bowl concert on Friday celebrates the old made new in Anna Thorvaldsdottir’s *Impressions* for harpsichord and ends with a summit meeting between Craig Taborn and Cory Smythe, two dazzlingly inventive composers and pianists whose worlds encompass creative music, free jazz, new music, and beyond.

In its West Coast premiere, Australian composer Liza Lim’s *Sex Magic* for solo contrabass flute and electronics centers Friday afternoon. Inspired by Claire Chase’s towering contrabass flute (Bertha), *Sex Magic* celebrates the sacred erotic in women’s history, evoking the giant bass flutes of Papua New Guinea and the Australian Didjeridoo in a work that ritually moves across three altars, creating a mystical, mesmerizing evocation of both the present and the timeless past.

Terry Riley’s *The Holy Liftoff* will be featured on the Friday evening Libbey Bowl concert. Performed by Claire Chase and the JACK Quartet, *The Holy Liftoff* was conceived as a series of musical sketches and brilliantly colored drawings. Of Riley’s recent work Chase said, “At 90 years young, Terry is on fire with ideas. He’s creating new ideas and inciting collaborations and connections with urgency and vitality. For Ojai, we are imagining the limitless variations, realizations and possible interpretations of his ‘liftoff’ to include both performers and audiences.” Music for a “chorus of cellos” by Sofia Gubaidulina and Julius Eastman precede *The Holy Liftoff*.

On Saturday, June 7, following a free “morning meditation” in the Ojai Meadow Preserves, a collaboration with the Ojai Valley Land Conservancy, the first Libbey Bowl concert of the day centers on the West Coast premiere of Anna Thorvaldsdottir’s *Ubique* for flute, two cellos, piano and electronics. Thorvaldsdottir describes the work as

“inspired by the notion of being everywhere at the same time, an enveloping omnipresence, while simultaneously focusing on details within the density of each particle, echoed in various forms of fragmentation and interruption and in the sustain of certain elements of a sound beyond their natural resonance - throughout the piece, sounds are both reduced to their smallest particles and their atmospheric presence expanded towards the infinite.”

Saturday afternoon continues with the West Coast premiere of composer-pianist Craig Taborn’s *Busy Griefs and Endangered Charms* for flute, clarinet, cello, piano and electronics. Taborn’s critically acclaimed *Busy Griefs and Endangered Charms* was inspired by a dream in which plants awake, blossom, grow and change as the dreamer walks through a garden. (A second performance of Taborn’s *Busy Griefs and Endangered Charms* will be offered on Sunday afternoon, June 8.) At the Libbey Bowl that evening is a program of music by Bach, Sofia Gubaidulina (inspired by Bach) and Tania León, preceding Liza Lim’s large-scale *How Forests Think*. A work inspired by the imagery of ancient forests as vibrant, symbiotic communities that, as the Lim writes, “nourish the old connections and keep a song going. One might think of a forest as a choir or certainly as an ensemble. Stories, dreams, and thoughts inhabit multiple forms in a living matrix.”

Sunday morning begins with another free “morning meditation” program. The JACK Quartet then explores their ongoing “Modern/Medieval” project mid-morning at Libbey Bowl, with music from the 14th to 17th centuries renewed for contemporary performance by composers/JACK violinists Christopher Otto and Austin Wulliman. The program includes the west coast premiere of Susie Ibarra’s *Sky Islands*, a musical tribute to rich and fragile ecosystems inspired by the distinct rainforest habitats of Luzon, Philippines. The work features the interlocking rhythms and melodies of Philippine Northern-style bamboo, gong, and flute music, performed on new sound sculptures of gong metals. *Sky Islands* is described as “a musical call to action, drawing awareness to dwindling biodiversity, changing climate and global community practices.”

An exuberant all-company 2025 Festival finale includes music by Leilehua Lanzilotti, Pauline Oliveros’ *The Witness* and the West Coast premiere of Terry Riley’s *Pulsefield* as the joyous ending in celebration of his 90th birthday.

A complete 2025 Ojai Music Festival schedule will be announced in January 2025. Programs and artists are subject to change. For 2025 artist and composer biographies and for Festival updates, visit OjaiFestival.org.

EXPERIENCE THE 79th OJAI MUSIC FESTIVAL, JUNE 5 TO 8, 2025

2025 Libbey Bowl series passes are available and may be purchased online at OjaiFestival.org or by calling (805) 646-2053. Passes start at \$215 for reserved seating. Lawn Area passes start at \$90. Single tickets and day passes will go on sale in spring 2025. Follow Festival updates at OjaiFestival.org.

CLAIRE CHASE, MUSIC DIRECTOR

Claire Chase, described by *The New York Times* recently as “the North Star of her instrument’s ever-expanding universe,” is a musician, interdisciplinary artist, and teacher. Passionately dedicated to the creation of new ecosystems for the music of our time, Chase has given the world premieres of hundreds of new works by a new generation of artists. She was the first flutist to be awarded a MacArthur Fellowship in 2012, and in 2017 was

the first flutist to be awarded the Avery Fisher Prize for Classical Music from Lincoln Center for the Performing Arts. Chase served as the Richard and Barbara Debs Creative Chair at Carnegie Hall in the 2022-23 season and serves as the Music Director for the 2025 Ojai Music Festival. Previously, Chase performed at the Ojai Music Festival with the International Contemporary Ensemble (ICE) in 2015 with that year's Music Director Steven Schick, in 2016 with Music Director Peter Sellars, and in 2017 with Music Director Vijay Iyer.

Chase has performed as a soloist recently with the New York Philharmonic, Los Angeles Philharmonic, San Francisco Symphony, Helsinki Philharmonic, BBC Scottish Symphony, Munich Chamber Orchestra, and London Philharmonia. Upcoming concerto projects include the world premiere of a new duo concerto by Dai Fujikura for Chase and the violinist Patricia Kopatchinskaja, which the pair will premiere with the Netherlands Radio Philharmonic at the Royal Concertgebouw in Amsterdam, with subsequent performances with Ensemble Resonanz at the Elbphilharmonie in Hamburg and on tour in Switzerland, Belgium, Turkey, and Greece. In the 2022-23 season, Chase premiered a new duo concerto by Felipe Lara with the vocalist and bassist esperanza spalding and the conductor Susanna Mälkki, which was named one of the Best Classical Music Performances of the Year by *The New York Times*.

In 2013, Chase launched the 24-year commissioning project *Density 2036*, described by *The New Yorker* as “a quarter-century journey with little precedent.” Now in its 12th year, *Density* reimagines the solo flute literature through commissions, performances, recordings, educational initiatives, and a community-focused approach to cultural production. In 2023, Chase performed all ten *Density* programs to date in a weeklong series of events co-produced by Carnegie Hall and The Kitchen. Central to the *Density* project is a commitment to supporting an international, multigenerational community of flutists who will take the *Density* repertoire in bold new interpretive directions. The *Density* Fellows program, launched in 2023 in celebration of the 10th anniversary, provides an international cohort of emerging flutists with the resources to make the *Density* repertoire their own. Chase is the artistic director of *Density Arts*, a nonprofit organization dedicated to the advancement of the flute in the 21st century.

As an undergraduate at Oberlin Conservatory, Chase co-founded the International Contemporary Ensemble, a collective of musicians, digital media artists, producers, and educators committed to creating collaborations built on equity and cultural responsiveness. She served as the ensemble's artistic director until 2017 and as an ensemble member on performance and educational projects on five continents, developing an artist-driven organizational model that resulted in the premieres of over 1,000 new works and earned the group multiple Chamber Music America/ASCAP Awards for Adventurous Programming, the Trailblazer Award from the American Music Center, and the Ensemble of the Year Award from Musical America Worldwide.

A deeply committed educator, Chase is Professor of the Practice in the Department of Music at Harvard University, where she teaches courses on contemporary music, interdisciplinary collaboration, and cultural advocacy. Chase is also Creative Associate at The Juilliard School, where she mentors young artists and engages students in a range of interdisciplinary projects. With her longtime colleague Steven Schick, she cofounded Ensemble Evolution at Banff Centre for Arts & Creativity, a three-week intensive for the next generation of interdisciplinary artists, curators, and teachers. Chase's Debs Creative Chair residency at Carnegie Hall encompassed programming for all ages, including a “Day of Listening” for children and families inspired by the

listening philosophies of Pauline Oliveros. Chase will partner with the Getty Museum in Los Angeles to expand her Pauline Oliveros project as part of the PST ART x Science Collide festival in 2024-25.

Claire Chase's extensive discography includes eight solo albums of world premiere recordings and dozens of collaborative recordings with ensembles, composers, and sound artists from a wide range of musical genres. Chase grew up in Leucadia, California, with the childhood dream of becoming a professional baseball player before she discovered the flute. She lives in Brooklyn.

ARA GUZELIMIAN, ARTISTIC AND EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Ara Guzelimian is the 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 from 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. He continues at Juilliard as Special Advisor.

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.

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, 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 openhearted programming in the most beautiful and welcoming of settings, with audiences and artists to match its aspirations. Now in its 78th year, 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 programming as well as robust educational offerings that serve thousands of public-school students and seniors. The organization's apex is the world-renowned Festival, which takes place over four days 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. The intimate Festival weekend, considered a highlight of the

international music summer season, welcomes up to 5,000 patrons and reaches exponentially more audiences worldwide through streaming and broadcasts of concerts and discussions throughout the year.

Since its founding in 1947, the Ojai Music Festival has presented expansive programming 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 Mitsuko Uchida, Rhiannon Giddens, 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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