



OREGON BACH FESTIVAL

MEDIA RELEASE

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DYNAMIC, DIVERSE, AND ENGAGING CHANGES LAY AHEAD AS OREGON BACH FESTIVAL LOOKS TO THE FUTURE

August 27, 2017 – [Eugene, OR] – **Oregon Bach Festival** (OBF) is moving forward in an exciting direction that will bring new voices, points of views and artists with more diverse backgrounds to festival audiences. Starting in summer 2018, guest curators will work with OBF staff to build a season of dynamic and engaging musical selections led by world-renowned conductors.

As part of the transition, OBF is parting ways with artistic director Matthew Halls. Halls leaves the Festival with a legacy that includes the establishment of the Organ Institute, the Vocal Fellows program, and the Berwick Academy for Historically Informed Performance. During his tenure, Halls conducted many of Bach's masterworks, including his own reconstruction of the composer's lost *St. Mark Passion*, as well the world premiere of *A European Requiem* from Sir James MacMillan.

The transition is a strategic decision, made by OBF administrative leadership and the University of Oregon, and will keep the festival relevant in the ever-changing classical music industry.

"There's an emerging trend," explains OBF executive director Janelle McCoy, "to plan a season from the perspective of a guest curator from a different field or genre and then invite conductors to participate, rather than programming from a single artistic voice. More and more organizations around the country, such as Ojai Music Festival, are using this model to expand the choices available to their audiences and participants. These choices may include disparate visions from a choreographer, stage director, or jazz musician, for example. We are eager to bring this approach to university students and faculty, as well as our patrons, musicians, and education program participants."

The change also comes as part of the ongoing process to integrate OBF more deeply into the UO community and align itself more strategically with the university's goals. "We look forward to a wider range of programmatic choices, community events, and cross-departmental relationships with UO faculty, staff, and students – from the UNESCO Crossings Institute, the Department of Equity and Inclusion, and the UO museums, to traditional academic units such as the School of Music and Dance, food studies, classics, humanities, history, and planning,

public policy and management. These partnerships,” says McCoy, “might include lectures, public seminars, classes, publications, interactive programming, and so on.” This is especially relevant as OBF will spend October celebrating the opening of its first permanent home on the UO campus – the new Berwick Hall - built immediately adjacent to the School of Music and Dance.

OBF has already publicized plans to include the world premiere of *The Passion of Yeshua* by Richard Danielpour and Philip Glass’ Piano Concerto No. 3 featuring Simone Dinnerstein in their 2018 Season. The full schedule of events and artists will be announced in January.

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Oregon Bach Festival (OBF) has presented the masterworks of J.S. Bach, and composers inspired by his work, to audiences in Eugene and throughout the State of Oregon for nearly five decades. The annual event began as a collaboration between German Conductor and Organist, Helmuth Rilling and former Associate Dean of the University of Oregon School Of Music, Royce Saltzman. OBF is now an international festival of worldwide repute, presenting traditional choral-orchestral masterworks, internationally renowned guest artists such as Yo-Yo Ma, Midori, Pink Martini and Joshua Bell, and offering educational opportunities, children and family programing, and community events.