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Press Room



Images of Vijay Iyer and other *Ojai at Berkeley* artists are available for download from the Cal Performances [press room](#).

CAL PERFORMANCES AT UC BERKELEY PRESENTS
OJAI AT BERKELEY 2017
VIJAY IYER, MUSIC DIRECTOR

FESTIVAL HIGHLIGHTS UNIQUE MUSICAL COMMUNITIES
FROM THE PERSPECTIVES OF COMPOSERS, PERFORMERS & IMPROVISERS
THURSDAY–SATURDAY, JUNE 15–17, 2017

BAY AREA PREMIERE OF *EMERGENCE* BY VIJAY IYER
Vijay Iyer Trio + ICE (International Contemporary Ensemble)
+ Oberlin Contemporary Music Ensemble, Steven Schick, Conductor

BAY AREA PREMIERE AND CAL PERFORMANCES CO-COMMISSION
VIOLIN CONCERTO, *TROUBLE*, by VIJAY IYER
Jennifer Koh, Violin

BAY AREA PREMIERE OF *AFTERWORD, AN OPERA* BY GEORGE LEWIS
CELEBRATING THE LEGACY OF CHICAGO'S AACM
(ASSOCIATION FOR THE ADVANCEMENT OF CREATIVE MUSICIANS)

RADHE RADHE: RITES OF HOLI

Multi-media Collaboration of Vijay Iyer (Music) & Prashant Bhargava (Film)

THE RITE OF SPRING

In A New Chamber Arrangement by Cliff Colnot

**VIJAY IYER & WADADA LEO SMITH DUO; VIJAY IYER, ZAKIR HUSSAIN,
RUDRESH MAHANTHAPPA, ARUNA SAIRAM**

***Ojai at Berkeley* Follows the 71st Ojai Music Festival
June 8–11, 2017, Ojai, California**

#WhyOjai

Berkeley, December 6, 2016 — Cal Performances announces *Ojai at Berkeley 2017*, a weekend-long festival of contemporary music from June 15–17, 2017, that marks the seventh year of artistic partnership with Southern California’s esteemed Ojai Music Festival. The music director for the 2017 festival is trailblazing pianist, improviser, composer, and musical thinker, **Vijay Iyer**, who earned his Ph.D. at UC Berkeley in 1998 and has since gone on to a storied career as an artist exploring the intersections of improvisation and composition in his acclaimed works. Iyer’s program for *Ojai at Berkeley* includes several notable premieres of his own chamber music; the Bay Area premiere of an opera by **George Lewis** following its West Coast premiere in Ojai; a music and film collaboration that links Stravinsky’s *The Rite of Spring* to Hindu religious celebrations; and a cast of versatile performers, including the **International Contemporary Ensemble**, **Steven Schick**, **Jennifer Koh**, **Wadada Leo Smith**, **Zakir Hussain**, and others.

Ojai and Berkeley, two distinct communities with similar values, are both known for intrepid artistic discovery, spirited intellect, and enduring engagement in the arts. Inaugurated in 2011, the *Ojai at Berkeley* collaboration enables co-commissions and co-productions, and allows artists to achieve more than could be imagined by each organization on its own. Every year, a new music director is selected to bring his or her musical vision, values, and artistic community to shape the festival’s programming. The programs of *Ojai at Berkeley 2017* are created by Iyer, in collaboration with Thomas W. Morris, artistic director of the Ojai Music Festival, and Matías Tarnopolsky, artistic and executive director of Cal Performances.

The notion of musical community underlies Iyer’s programming vision for the festival, as he makes connections across genres to help audiences discover how composers, performers, and improvisers make music together. He notes, “I have many different affinities musically, and also very real

associations across different musical communities, generations, geographic locations, and traditions that speak to me and through me. Our 2017 Festival feels like a good opportunity to update the idea of what music is today.” A thread that runs through the 2017 Festival is the legacy and lasting impact of one such musical community, the Association for the Advancement of Creative Musicians (AACM), an organization founded in Chicago in 1965 by a group of African-American experimentalists. Many of this year’s artists have been directly involved in, or strongly influenced by, this powerful and lasting artistic movement.

Ojai at Berkeley 2017 opens on Thursday, June 15 in Zellerbach Hall with two recent works by Iyer—the Bay Area premiere of *Emergence*, performed by ICE, Oberlin Contemporary Music Ensemble, and the Vijay Iyer Trio conducted by Steven Schick following its US premiere at the Ojai Music Festival; and the Bay Area premiere of his Violin Concerto, *Trouble*, composed for, and performed by, violinist Jennifer Koh and chamber orchestra given its world premiere at Ojai on June 8. The concerto was co-commissioned by the Ojai Music Festival, Cal Performances, and the Boston Symphony Orchestra. The evening concludes with a duo performance by Iyer and revered trumpet player and AACM founding member, Wadada Leo Smith—a musical collaboration the *Los Angeles Times* has called “haunting, meditative, and transportive.”

Friday evening’s concert on June 16 in Zellerbach Playhouse features the Bay Area premiere of George Lewis’ opera, *Afterword, an opera*, performed by ICE with soprano Joelle Lamarre, contralto Gwendolyn Brown, and tenor Julian Otis, with Steven Schick conducting. Lewis is a composer, theorist, musicologist, interactive computer artist and virtuoso trombonist with an endowed chair at Columbia University. A fellow of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences and the British Academy, Lewis’s other honors include a MacArthur Fellowship (2002) and a Guggenheim Fellowship (2015). His work has been documented on more than 150 recordings, and been presented by the BBC Scottish Symphony Orchestra, Ensemble Dal Niente, London Philharmonia Orchestra, Radio-Sinfonieorchester Stuttgart, London Sinfonietta, Talea Ensemble, and Ensemble Pamplemousse, among others. In fall 1990 Lewis held the position of Regents Lecturer at UC Berkeley’s Center for New Music and Audio Technologies, working with his close colleague and CNMAT’s founder, the late UC Berkeley Music Professor David Wessel. In Spring 2013 Lewis was the UC Berkeley Music Department’s Ernest Bloch Professor in residence, during which time he presented a series of lectures on improvisation, addressing key themes and issues in new

improvisation studies including ethics, social identity, technology, and interactivity, leading directly to the publication of his co-edited two-volume *Oxford Handbook of Critical Improvisation Studies* in 2016. This residency also featured the world premiere of his sextet *Hexis* (2013), conducted by Schick and performed by the San Francisco Contemporary Music Players, and a performance of his octet *Ikons* (2010) by the Eco Ensemble, both in February 2013. He is the author of *A Power Stronger than Itself: The AACM and American Experimental Music*, an award-winning, comprehensive cultural history of this influential organization and its members, and his opera draws from the book's afterword, consisting of transcribed dialogues and testimonials about the AACM's genesis more than 50 years ago. *Afterword*, an opera will be semi-staged and directed by Sean Griffin.

For the Saturday afternoon concert on June 17 at 2pm in Zellerbach Hall, Iyer is joined by close collaborator, saxophonist Rudresh Mahanthappa, along with two giants of Indian classical music: celebrated Carnatic vocalist Aruna Sairam, and tabla star Zakir Hussain, for a set of masterful improvisation that defies the boundaries of genre or style.

The *Ojai at Berkeley* finale on Saturday, June 17 at 8pm in Zellerbach Hall, is a two-part homage to Stravinsky's *The Rite of Spring*. *RADHE RADHE: Rites of Holi*, commissioned five years ago to celebrate the centennial of Stravinsky's monumental work, is a vivid and mesmerizing multimedia collaboration by Iyer and filmmaker Prashant Bhargava. The work explores another rite of spring, the Hindu festival of Holi, famous for its revelry of color in celebration of the love between the deities Krishna and Radha. Bhargava filmed the ravishing imagery of a Holi festival in northern India, later editing the footage into a 37-minute film based on Stravinsky's musical structure. Iyer composed a new score to complement Bhargava's visual ballet; the score will be performed live to accompany the film, by ICE joined by Iyer and drummer Tyshawn Sorey — whose *Josephine Baker: A Portrait* was featured in *Ojai at Berkeley*, 2016 — and conducted by Steven Schick. The concert opens with the West Coast premiere of a new chamber arrangement of *The Rite of Spring* by composer Cliff Colnot for the same ensemble.

About Vijay Iyer, *Music Director*

Composer-pianist Vijay Iyer is the Franklin D. and Florence Rosenblatt Professor of the Arts at Harvard University. He was named *DownBeat* Magazine's Jazz Artist of the Year for 2012, 2015, and 2016, and he received a 2016 US Artists Fellowship, 2013 MacArthur Fellowship, a 2012 Doris

Duke Performing Artist Award, and a 2011 Grammy nomination. He has released 21 albums, including *A Cosmic Rhythm with Each Stroke* (ECM, 2016) in duo with Wadada Leo Smith, named “Best New Music” by *Pitchfork*; *Break Stuff* (ECM, 2015) with the Vijay Iyer Trio, winner of the German Record Critics’ Award for Album of the Year; and *Holding it Down: The Veterans’ Dreams Project* (Pi Recordings, 2013), his third collaboration with Mike Ladd, named Album of the Year in the *Los Angeles Times*. Iyer’s compositions have been commissioned and premiered by Bang on a Can All-Stars, the Silk Road Ensemble, Brooklyn Rider, Imani Winds, American Composers Orchestra, International Contemporary Ensemble, and Jennifer Koh, among others. He is director of the Banff International Workshop in Jazz and Creative Music.

About the Ojai Music Festival

From its founding in 1947, the Ojai Music Festival has created a place for groundbreaking musical experiences, bringing together innovative artists and curious audiences in an intimate, idyllic setting 80 miles northwest of Los Angeles. The Festival presents broad-ranging programs in unusual ways with an eclectic mix of rarely performed music, refreshing juxtapositions of musical styles, and works by today’s composers. The four-day festival is an immersive experience with concerts, free community events, symposia, and gatherings. Considered a highlight of the international music summer season, Ojai has remained a leader in the classical music landscape for seven decades. Through its unique structure of the artistic director appointing an annual music director, Ojai has presented a “who’s who” of music including: Aaron Copland, Igor Stravinsky, Olivier Messiaen, Michael Tilson Thomas, Kent Nagano, Pierre Boulez, John Adams, Esa-Pekka Salonen, Robert Spano, Dawn Upshaw, Mark Morris, Jeremy Denk, Steven Schick, and Peter Sellars. The 2017 Ojai Music Festival takes place June 8-11, 2017. Visit OjaiFestival.org for a complete listing of events and performances.

About Cal Performances

Cal Performances is the performing arts presenter and producer of the University of California, Berkeley, fulfilling its mission by presenting, producing, and commissioning renowned and emerging artists in music, dance, and theater. Cal Performances reaches more than 150,000 people annually through concerts and campus and community events, including talks, symposia, lecture demonstrations, and academic courses based on Cal Performances’ season. Under the leadership of Matías Tarnopolsky, the organization launched Berkeley RADICAL (Research and Development

Initiative in Creativity Arts and Learning) to cultivate the artistic literacy of future audiences and connect some of the most innovative artists in the world with the intellectual capital of UC Berkeley. The 2016/17 season is the second season for Berkeley RADICAL, and embraces three strands of artistic exploration: Inclusion, Innovation, and Immersion. More information on Berkeley RADICAL can be found at calperformances.org/berkeley-radical.

Ticket Information

Tickets for *Ojai at Berkeley*, Thursday–Saturday, June 15–17, 2017, are \$20 each and a festival pass good for all four *Ojai at Berkeley* concerts can be purchased for \$60. Half-price tickets are available for UC Berkeley students. Tickets go on sale to the public Saturday, December 10 at 1pm and are available through the Ticket Office at Zellerbach Hall, at (510) 642-9988, at calperformances.org, and at the door. For more information about discounts, go to calperformances.org/discounts.

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**CALENDAR EDITORS, PLEASE NOTE:
CAL PERFORMANCES AT UC BERKELEY PRESENTS
OJAI AT BERKELEY
JUNE 15–17, 2017
IN ZELLERBACH HALL AND ZELLERBACH PLAYHOUSE
Vijay Iyer, music director
Thomas W. Morris, artistic director, Ojai Music Festival
Matias Tarnopolsky, artistic and executive director, Cal Performances**

SCHEDULE AND PROGRAMS:

Thursday, June 15, 2017 at 8pm
Zellerbach Hall
Bancroft Way at Dana Street
UC Berkeley Campus

Vijay Iyer / *Emergence* (Bay Area Premiere)
Vijay Iyer, piano
Stephan Crump, bass
Tyshawn Sorey, drums
International Contemporary Ensemble (ICE)
Oberlin Contemporary Music Ensemble
Steven Schick, conductor

Vijay Iyer / *Trouble* (Bay Area Premiere, Cal Performances co-commission)
Jennifer Koh, violin
International Contemporary Ensemble (ICE)

Oberlin Contemporary Music Ensemble
Steven Schick, conductor

Vijay Iyer and Wadada Leo Smith / *A Cosmic Rhythm with Each Stroke*

Vijay Iyer, piano

Wadada Leo Smith, trumpet

Tickets: \$20 each and a festival pass good for all four *Ojai at Berkeley* concerts can be purchased for \$60. Tickets go on sale to the public Saturday, December 10.

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Friday, June 16, 2017 at 8pm
Zellerbach Playhouse
Bancroft Way at Dana Street
UC Berkeley Campus

George Lewis / *Afterword, an opera*
International Contemporary Ensemble (ICE)

Joelle Lamarre, soprano

Gwendolyn Brown, contralto

Julian Otis, tenor

Sean Griffin, director

Narda Alcorn, production stage manager

Steven Schick, conductor

Pre-performance Talk: A pre-performance talk with *Ojai at Berkeley* music director Vijay Iyer, composer George Lewis, and Cal Performances executive and artistic director Matías Tarnopolsky is offered at 7pm in Zellerbach Playhouse. Free to ticket holders

Tickets: \$20 each and a festival pass good for all four *Ojai at Berkeley* concerts can be purchased for \$60. Tickets go on sale to the public Saturday, December 10.

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Saturday, June 17, 2017 at 2pm
Zellerbach Hall
Bancroft Way at Dana Street
UC Berkeley Campus

Aruna Sairam, vocals

Zakir Hussain, tabla

Rudresh Mahanthappa, saxophone

Vijay Iyer, piano

Tickets: \$20 each and a festival pass good for all four *Ojai at Berkeley* concerts can be purchased for \$60. Tickets go on sale to the public Saturday, December 10.

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Saturday, June 17, 2017 at 8pm
Zellerbach Hall
Bancroft Way at Dana Street
UC Berkeley Campus

Igor Stravinsky / *The Rite of Spring* (arr. Cliff Colnot)

International Contemporary Ensemble (ICE)

Vijay Iyer, piano

Tyshawn Sorey, drums

Steven Schick, conductor

Sven Furberg, projections

Vijay Iyer / *RADHE RADHE: Rites of Holi*

Music by Vijay Iyer

Film by Prashant Bhargava

International Contemporary Ensemble (ICE)

Vijay Iyer, piano

Tyshawn Sorey, drums

Steven Schick, conductor

Pre-performance Talk: *Ojai at Berkeley* music director Vijay Iyer and Cal Performances executive and artistic director Matías Tarnopolsky provide insights into the evening's concert at 7pm in Zellerbach Hall. Free to ticket holders

Tickets: \$20 each and a festival pass good for all four *Ojai at Berkeley* concerts can be purchased for \$60. Tickets go on sale to the public Saturday, December 10.