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## **GET TO KNOW YOUR FESTIVAL #4** **KEYS TO LEADING A FESTIVAL IN A PANDEMIC**

SUNRIVER, ORE – *(This is the 4th in a series of 44th Season previews of Sunriver Music Festival. Read all stories here: [www.sunrivermusic.org](http://www.sunrivermusic.org)).*



In honor of the hundreds of volunteers it takes to run the Sunriver Music Festival, we asked Festival presidents, past and current, to share the keys to leading a successful music organization through a pandemic.

**Start with a shared vision.** Current President Clyde Thompson and Past Presidents Mal Murphy and Phillip Ruder all agreed that a shared vision among staff, volunteers, and the Board of Trustees is a critical starting point.

"Without a shared vision it would be difficult to weather the COVID-19

challenge and come out the other end of that tunnel with our orchestra intact, and a new and exciting Artistic Director and Conductor on board," explains Mal Murphy.

Current President Clyde Thompson agrees. "Successfully navigating the Festival through this transition time and getting a fresh start with a new Artistic Director at the helm is a vision we all share."

Murphy adds that financial stability is also part of the vision. "It is important that we continue presenting the highest quality performances as Central Oregon's premier classical music experience, while simultaneously safeguarding the Festival's precious financial stability. Fortunately, we have a unique endowment for an organization of our size and location."

**Deliver a quality musical experience.** "Everyone is dedicated to bringing Central Oregon the exclusive opportunity to hear ageless masterpieces performed by a world-class

professional orchestra," states Phillip Ruder. Ruder brings a unique and valued perspective to the Board, having been concertmaster of the Festival Orchestra for decades as well as concertmaster of renowned orchestras such as Cincinnati Symphony and others.

Current President Thompson points out that orchestras today face a difficult balancing act. "We face the same challenge as other classical orchestras - staying current, engaging, and relevant, while American culture and demographics are changing," explains Thompson. "Staying true to our identity as a professional chamber orchestra, performing classical music from the great orchestral repertoire, is also important. So, it's a balancing act." Ruder adds that this balancing act is especially important to attracting new audiences. "Expanding the audience to a younger crowd, always improving musical quality, selling almost every seat, and spreading the magic with informality and diversity, are all keys to our upcoming season."

**Nurture the next generation of artists.** Often overlooked by attendees is the Festival's 25-year history of supporting music education in Central Oregon. "That is the key to our strong community support," adds Thompson. The Festival's commitment to music education, especially our Young Artists Scholarship program which has awarded more than a half million dollars to aspiring classical music students."

"Yes, our ongoing outreach and assistance in education is certainly critical to having a dynamic Festival," adds Ruder. "It's great to support and assist qualified students throughout Central Oregon in achieving their goal of a career in classical music," concludes Murphy.

**Continue a commitment to local music.** All the presidents interviewed shared that one of the great joys of leading Sunriver Music Festival is continuing their love of live music.

"Being President enhanced the love affair begun in 1981 when I started a 26-year tenure as concertmaster of the Festival Orchestra," explains Ruder. "This relationship was not only richly rewarding musically, but added immeasurably to my family's treasure trove of beloved memories."

"I was stunned when I moved here in 1995 and was taken to my first Festival concert the second day I was in town," adds Thompson. "At that time, the Bend area had a population of just 32,000 people. It was amazing that such a relatively small population could have such a top-notch orchestra as part of its culture."

"My wife Jane and I have been in love with the music since we arrived 18 years ago," adds Murphy. It's been my pleasure to work with a dedicated and highly qualified staff, and exceptionally talented and professional orchestra and conductor. Being able to contribute, even in a small way, to the success and indeed the triumph of Sunriver Music Festival is an honor."

You can add your commitment to local music by attending this year's Summer Festival live August 13-23, 2021 in Sunriver. Go online for more information on tickets.

[www.sunrivermusic.org](http://www.sunrivermusic.org)

**PRESIDENTIAL BACKGROUNDS** - Clyde Thompson, current President, is a former Director of Choirs and Music Professor at Central Oregon Community College. He is the founder of the Central Oregon Mastersingers. Phillip Ruder, President 2017-2020, has been concertmaster of renowned orchestras in Cincinnati, Reno, Aspen, Dallas, and more. Mal Murphy, President 2012-2017, is a retired attorney having practiced in both government and the private sector in Olympia, Washington.

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