

Colorado Fest Names New Music Director

By [Susan Elliott](#), *Musical America*

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Peter Oundjian is to be the next music director of the Colorado Music Festival. He comes to the post after having served as artistic advisor last summer, an experience that he apparently found favorable. Oundjian is the former longtime music director of the Toronto Symphony Orchestra, now conductor emeritus.

“There is a magical, frontier atmosphere to the festival that I find incredibly refreshing and invigorating, whether I’m outdoors amidst the natural beauty or on stage with the orchestra inside After leading a number of orchestras year-round as music director, this is an exciting change of pace!”

Oundjian succeeds Jean-Marie Zeitouni who left after three years in the job. Zeitouni is now the festival’s principal guest conductor.

Based in Boulder, the six-week Colorado Music Festival was founded in 1977 by Viennese conductor and violinist Giora Bernstein. This summer it runs June 27 to August 3 with a hyper focus on the composer of upcoming summer-fall-winter-and-spring seasons everywhere: Beethoven.

In the primary venue, the Chautauqua Auditorium, the new music director will lead the CMF Orchestra in honoring the composer’s 250th anniversary and legacy. They also will tackle works by Berlioz, Mozart, Vivian Fund, Copland, Mahler, and Osvaldo Golijov. A host of guest artists are on the docket and chamber concerts plus informal “Talks Under the Tent.”

Prior to his conducting career, Oundjian was first violinist of the Tokyo String Quartet for 14 years. Focal dystonia necessitated his exchanging the violin for the baton in 1995 and he has since conducted widely. He was music director of the TSO from 2004-18 and of the Royal Scottish National Orchestra from 2012 to 2018. Guest engagements have included the major orchestras of Los Angeles, Philadelphia, Boston, and Chicago, as well as a number of Asian and European ensembles. He has been a visiting professor at the Yale School of Music since 1981; he was appointed principal conductor of the Yale Philharmonia in 2016.