



*For Immediate Release*

*Press contact:*

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### **Alexander Mickelthwate Appointed New Music Director of the Bear Valley Music Festival**

The Bear Valley Music Festival is excited to announce Alexander Mickelthwate as only the fourth Music Director in its 54-year history. Mickelthwate succeeds Maestro Michael Morgan who passed away in August 2021 having just completed his 8<sup>th</sup> season with the Festival.

“I’m so excited for my position as the new music director of the Bear Valley Music Festival. Such wonderful and smart leadership. Such a stunning place. And to perform music with our fantastic musicians in those surroundings, oh my gosh, what a treat!” said Mickelthwate. “I actually knew Michael Morgan quite well as he was a mentor of mine at the beginning of my career. He was the one conductor I felt comfortable calling with questions. And he was always there with answers. So it is a special honor to stand on his shoulders and to continue his legacy in Bear Valley.”

Mickelthwate is in his third full season as Music Director of the Oklahoma City Philharmonic where he’s built a reputation for creating uniquely tailored programs to bring in new audiences. Under his leadership, the organization has expanded its artistic horizons; increased the number of onstage and city-wide collaborations; commissioned works commemorating significant events and anniversaries; and is currently completing its first-ever recording project with the international Naxos label.

Before Oklahoma City he was Music Director of the Winnipeg Symphony in Canada for 12 years where he initiated a tradition of commissioning and conducting new charts each year with different Canadian bands, from pop to hip hop to country. Prior to that he held positions as Associate Conductor of the Los Angeles Philharmonic and Assistant Conductor of the Atlanta Symphony. He has guest conducted major symphonies all around the world. Mickelthwate was born in Germany and moved to the US to study conducting at the Peabody Conservatory and Tanglewood.

The Bear Valley Music Festival received over 60 applications from across the country. Search Committee Chair and Board President Julia Mee commented “We were thrilled and honored to have so many extremely qualified candidates apply to build upon the incredible work done by Michael Morgan. Alexander stood out from the start as someone who had keen insights into the special opportunities and challenges that come with an outdoor music festival. He brought



innovative programming ideas to us and really embraced the wide breadth of musical genres we feature in our summer festival. He has family ties to the area and is eager to enjoy beautiful Bear Valley with his wife and two sons. We couldn't be more excited to have Alexander join us."

This summer's festival kicks off on Friday, July 22<sup>nd</sup> and concludes on Sunday, August 7<sup>th</sup>. Programming will be announced in early May including a special celebration of Michael Morgan. More information about the Bear Valley Music Festival can be found at [bearvalleymusicfestival.org](http://bearvalleymusicfestival.org).

### **About the Bear Valley Music Festival**

The Bear Valley Music Festival is a 54-year-old yearly summer event in Bear Valley, California, located 180 miles east of San Francisco at just above 7200 feet elevation in the Sierra Nevada. The Festival is a non-profit dedicated to serving the Bear Valley community, the Highway 4 corridor, and Central Valley and the Greater Bay Area.

While the Festival's roots are proudly in classical music, it promotes a diverse range of music. The concerts are held in a tent erected to serve as a concert hall, equipped with a stage large enough to hold a symphony orchestra. The festival traditionally begins on the second-to-last Friday in July and ends three Sundays later, drawing a total audience of roughly four thousand attendees to enjoy music from classical to rock to country to jazz.