



## 40<sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY FACT SHEET (1977-2017)

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HISTORICAL PHOTOS AND CLIPPINGS ARE AVAILABLE FOR PUBLICATION

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### “PRETTY GOOD ACOUSTICS IN HERE”

Ray Fabrizio, principal flute of the Sunriver Music Festival orchestra until his death and Sunriver resident Doug and Polly Kahle, are credited with the inspiration of creating a music festival in Sunriver’s Great Hall. In Kahles were entertaining long-time California friends, Ray Fabrizio and his wife, and they visited Sunriver’s historic Great Hall. In 1942, Camp Abbott, a training base for Army Engineers, was on the site of what would become the Sunriver Destination Resort. The Great Hall was built as an officers’ club and it was stunning.

The all wood two-story building featured a free-standing circular staircase, two enormous lava rock fireplaces, a huge balcony overlooking the main dining room and entertainment area, and a plethora of massive wood beams, all rough-hewn from native Ponderosa pine.

As the group toured this historic structure, Ray snapped his fingers and said *“Hmmm, pretty good acoustics in here.”* Then someone added *“Wouldn’t it be a great place for a music festival?”* Two and a half years later, the festival would launch its first season in 1978.

### KEY PLAYERS IN THE SUNRIVER MUSIC FESTIVAL’S FOUNDING

**Polly Kahle** – Sunriver resident Polly Kahle, with help from husband Doug, took the music festival idea and ran with it. Polly was instrumental in sharing her enthusiasm with volunteers from the resort community and professional musicians throughout America who loved Central Oregon summers.

**Ray Fabrizio** – A good friend and neighbor of the Kahles when they lived in California, Ray was a successful music teacher and symphony performer and one of the top flutists in America.

**James (Jim) Reeves** – Manager of the Louisville Symphony (1977), he prepared the original festival proposal that was presented in March 1977 to Ann Wall of Sunriver Properties (original developers of the Sunriver Lodge and owner of the Great Hall). Howard West was the Sunriver Properties Marketing Director at the time. Shortly after a meeting between Reeves and West, Reeves took a job with the Oregon Symphony. Jim was the founding executive director of the festival (1979-1988).

**Charlene Wilson Russell** – A California friend of Ray Fabrizio and a renowned cellist, she loved the idea of a summer classical festival. She talked to Jim Reeves about the idea. As noted, Jim wrote the original proposal for the festival. Fabrizio and Russell were responsible for recruiting the first group of musicians, who in turn, suggested others. Many had participated in the Bear Valley Festival in California.

**Ann Wall** – Publicity Director of Sunriver Properties. Jim Reeves presented the initial proposal to Ann and she loved the idea.

**Julie Peecher** – Originally Ann Wall's assistant, Julie picked up the proposal and was assigned to help the volunteer group get the festival started. With her enthusiasm and with the full support of Sunriver Properties she announced that the festival would launch in the summer 1978.

**Joan Hibbs** – Right hand person to Polly Kahle and a member of the Festival's first board, Hibbs was the Festival's first Publicity Director.

**Jean White** – Member of the Central Oregon Symphony Society and a strong supporter of the festival idea.

**Lawrence (Larry) Leighton Smith** – Director and Conductor of the Oregon Symphony (1977), he was the first Sunriver Music Festival Director. Was Smith concerned about being Maestro of a risky new festival? No, as he told interviewer Paul Redding in 1978:

*"When I came in, things were well organized and really not so risky. My experience at Orkney Springs, Virginia and Aspen, Colorado and Tanglewood had given me the knowledge of how pleasant a summer festival could be."*

**Sunriver Properties** – Owner/developer of the Sunriver Resort, they were instrumental in launching the festival. They saw the public relations value of the event and cooperated fully with the initial team. In an interview in 1978, Polly Kahle stated:

*"We couldn't have done it without their help. "They gave us Julie Peecher to work with, rooms for musicians, and they made the Great Hall available. They did so much."*

## **NO EXPERIENCE NEEDED**

Polly Kahle, Joan Hibbs and Julie Peecher had no experience in organizing a musical festival. As Polly stated in 1978:

*"It amazed me that it was a success. I had never even attended such an affair. When I walked in at the first rehearsal and heard all the beautiful sounds, I was thrilled."*

The founders were so busy with learning how to run a festival, they forgot to promote the festival to Sunriver residents. Again, Polly Kahle from a 1978 interview with Paul Redding:

*"We pretty much neglected the home owners. Many residents didn't have the slightest idea of what was going on. Yet when we needed housing for the musicians and a good response to the tickets sales, the whole community supported us. The house was packed at every performance and every musician had a host."*

## **ORIGINAL UNDERWRITERS:**

Central Oregon Symphony Society  
 Brooks Scanlon, Inc.  
 The S.S. Johnson Foundation  
 Pacific Trailways  
 The Bend Bulletin

## **ORIGINAL PARTNERS (SPECIAL THANKS TO):**

Sunriver Properties, Inc.  
 Mike's Central Oregon Music  
 Central Oregon Community College  
 Bend High School  
 Redmond High School  
 Bend Storage & Transfer Co.  
 Hoky Simonson

## **ORIGINAL PLANNING COMMITTEE:**

Julie Peecher, Public Relations Director, Sunriver Properties, Inc.  
 Polly Kahle, Sunriver OR  
 Joan Hibbs, Sunriver OR  
 Dr. Eugene White, Bend, OR  
 Jerry Yahna, Bend, OR.  
 Charles Hens, Bend, OR.  
 Charlene Wilson, Los Angeles, CA  
 Ray Fabrizio, Monterey, CA  
 Jan Neilson, Sunriver, OR

## **INTERESTING HISTORICAL TIDBITS:**

- First Artistic Director was Lawrence (Larry) Leighton Smith. He was part of the founding committee developing the fledgling Sunriver Music Festival.
- Larry resigned as Artistic Director after the 1983 season. Sun Kwok, the Music Director of Austin Symphony, became the festival's second musical director.
- Larry returned as Artistic Director in 1995 and remained in this position until 2012.
- George Hanson was invited to be Guest Conductor in 2011 to work with Larry. Due to illness, Larry was unable to come to Sunriver in 2011 and George conducted all the concerts that summer. He was hired in the fall of 2011 and continues in that position today.
- Sunriver Music Festival office burned down over Labor Day Weekend in 2006. It was located in Building 15 in Sunriver's Village Mall. Fortunately, historical scrapbooks made it through the fire and one desk. Pretty much everything else was lost.
- The festival made a major change in focus in 2010 with Bend concerts. Starting in 2010, half of the festival was moved to Bend, using the Tower and the high schools for Pops and Classical Concerts. Sunriver had been holding the Pops in Bend for years, but that was the only concert in Bend during the early years.

## **WHAT MAKES THE SUNRIVER MUSIC FESTIVAL UNIQUE?**

In an interview with Paul Redding in 1978, Jim Reeves explained why 40 years later, the festival is thriving:

*"This is an event which gets the musician cheek to jowl with the audience. As a musician, I can say there is a vast difference in playing to an audience at a distance across the footlights and playing to people that stood close to you and talked to you..."*

## **A STRONG FUTURE FOR THE NEXT 40 YEARS**

The festival continues to prosper under the direction of Executive Director Pam Beezley and a dedicated board and volunteer team. Again, from the Jim Reeves interview in 1978:

*"I think there is much to be said for a fairly primitive arena where people have to be packed in. I know that people are not there unless they very much want to be and this means that they love music. Aspen and other institutions have been allowed to get too large. We must guard*

*against this. Otherwise, I see the Sunriver Music Festival as a completely practical and expanding force for the good of Central Oregon."*

## **40 YEARS OF FESTIVAL LEADERSHIP SUCCESS**

<u>YEAR</u>	<u>PRESIDENTS</u>	<u>MANAGING DIRECTORS</u>
1979	Bruce Bischof	James Reeves
1980	Bruce Bishcof	James Reeves
1981	Herman Miller	James Reeves
1982	Herman Miller	James Reeves
1983	John A. Myers	James Reeves
1984	Robert Gibson	James Reeves
1985	Robert Gibson	James Reeves
1986	Sybil Gibson	James Reeves
1987	Sybil Gibson	James Reeves
1988	Sybil Gibson	James Reeves
1989	Dr. Ronald Carver	Kate Hannon
1990	Dr. Ronald Carver	Kate Hannon
1991	Jay Bowerman	Mark Jones
1992	Leland Smith	Mark Jones
1993	Leland Smith	Mark Jones
1994	Ruth Burleigh	Mark Jones
1995	Joseph Mitchell	Mark Jones
1996	Joseph Mitchell	Gail Mitchell
1997	Joan Fields	Gail Mitchell
1998	Joan Fields	Gail Mitchell
1999	Gwen Bailey	Lori Noack
2000	Gwen Bailey	Lori Noack
2001	Bergen Bull	Lori Noack
2002	Bergen Bull	Lori Noack
2003	Bergen Bull	Lori Noack
2004	Allyn Webb	Lori Noack
2005	Allyn Webb	Lori Noack
2006	Allyn Webb	Pamela Beezley
2007	Bergen Bull	Pamela Beezley
2008	Bergen Bull	Pamela Beezley
2009	Bruce Bischof	Pamela Beezley
2010	Bruce Bischof	Pamela Beezley
2011	Jim Putney	Pamela Beezley
2012	Lee Smith	Pamela Beezley
2013	Lee Smith	Pamela Beezley
2014	Mal Murphy	Pamela Beezley
2015	Mal Murphy	Pamela Beezley
2016	Mal Murphy	Pamela Beezley