

**Virginia Arts Festival announces new
Connie & Marc Jacobson Director of Chamber Music,
Olga Kern**

(October 9, 2018) The Virginia Arts Festival has announced that Russian-American **Olga Kern** has been chosen as the Festival's new **Connie & Marc Jacobson Director of Chamber Music**, beginning with the 2019 season.

First Prize Winner of the Rachmaninoff International Piano Competition at age 17 and Gold Medalist of the Van Cliburn International Piano Competition, Ms. Kern has also served as Jury Chairman of both the Seventh Cliburn International Amateur Piano Competition and the first Olga Kern International Piano Competition, where she also holds the title of Artistic Director. Since September 2017 she has served on the piano faculty of the prestigious Manhattan School of Music.

Ms. Kern has performed with the world's leading symphony orchestras in Asia, Europe and America and in recital in the world's great halls, including Carnegie Hall, Lincoln Center, the Great Hall of the Moscow Conservatory, Salzburg Festival House, La Scala in Milan, Tonhalle in Zurich, and the Châtelet in Paris.

With her vivid stage presence, passionately confident musicianship and extraordinary technique, the striking pianist will bring her talent to the Virginia Arts Festival for the 2019 season and beyond.

Ms. Kern steps into the shoes of the Virginia Arts Festival's founding director of chamber music programming, André-Michel Schub, who curated unforgettable musical experiences for artists and audiences at the Festival for 22 years. Also a pianist and Van Cliburn winner, Mr. Schub enabled Virginia Arts Festival to attract a "who's who" of great chamber music ensembles and soloists, including such stars as Lang Lang and Yuja Wang, the Tokyo String Quartet, the Juilliard String Quartet, the Miami String Quartet, and soloists such as Yo-Yo Ma, Itzhak Perlman, and his successor, Olga Kern.

Ms. Kern is a favorite of Virginia Arts Festival fans. She was featured in the 2017 Festival season in a solo recital and a Coffee Concert, and in 2015 she accompanied vocalist Renée Fleming at the Harrison Opera House.

"I am so thrilled to welcome Olga Kern as our new Director of Chamber Music," says Virginia Arts Festival Perry Artistic Director Robert W. Cross. "Working with this award-winning artist,

we look forward to continuing to burnish the Festival’s sterling reputation as a presenter of chamber music of the highest quality.”

Ms. Kern echoes Cross’s sentiments: “I have been impressed by the high artistic standards of the Virginia Arts Festival and I can’t wait to get started creating rewarding chamber music programs and inviting a new generation of wonderful artists for the Festival’s knowledgeable and fun-loving music lovers.”

More information, including performance dates for Olga Kern and Virginia Arts Festival chamber music and coffee concerts, will be announced in the coming months and will be available at www.vafest.org.

About the Virginia Arts Festival

Since 1997, the **Virginia Arts Festival** has transformed the cultural scene in southeastern Virginia, presenting great performers from around the world to local audiences and making this historic, recreation-rich region a cultural destination for visitors from across the United States and around the world. The Festival has presented numerous U.S. and regional premieres, and regularly commissions new works of music, dance, and theater from some of today's most influential composers, choreographers, and playwrights. The Festival's arts education programs reach tens of thousands of area schoolchildren each year through student matinees, in-school performances, artists' residencies, master classes and demonstrations. # # #

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