

Her role in planning the 2018 festival is unclear. McCoy said “absolutely” when *EW* asked whether she was actively involved in planning Bach 2018.

Brad Foley, dean of the UO School of Music and Dance, gave a slightly different account. “The artistic advisory committee that I appointed in late September is overseeing all planning for the 2018 festival,” he wrote in an email to *EW*. “Ms. McCoy has been chiefly responsible for the programming of the [Richard] Danielpour commission and the Phillip Glass commission concerts that were previously announced, and I am regularly asking for her input and advice as our committee continues to develop our plans. Ms. McCoy continues to oversee the day-to-day operations of the Oregon Bach Festival.”

NO TRESPASSING

Meanwhile, Ackerman was not only fired by OBF, she has been officially banned from the UO School of Music and Dance.

During the 2017 festival, no longer employed or accredited as a volunteer, Ackerman headed backstage at the music school’s Beall Concert Hall to visit friends before an OBF concert. Ackerman says she was asked to produce OBF credentials and was not allowed backstage. She left, she says.

A few nights later, she says, she was in the Beall Hall lobby before a concert when two UO police officers asked if she was Linda Ackerman and, when she said she was, presented her with a formal notice and ordered her to leave the property.

“I had been taking care of Matthew since he came to the festival in 2007,” she says. “They presented me with a trespass notice.” She was banned from the music school, meaning she can no longer even attend concerts there, Ackerman says, for 18 months.

Like Halls, Ackerman is no longer part of the Oregon Bach Festival — and neither she nor Halls nor longtime festival fans and supporters can find out why. ■

OBF 2018: STILL SHRINKING

In the wake of Matthew Halls’ firing, the festival tightens even more

Next summer’s festival will run, as scheduled, June 29 to July 14.

In what would be a big break with tradition, the opening-night concert might not involve choral music. Past OBF seasons have generally opened with a sprawling choral work such as Bach’s *Mass in B-minor*.

“The committee is floating a number of ideas for the opening concert — some with chorus, some without,” Foley said in an email. “No final decision has been made. The one thing we can say is that it will be an all-Bach concert.”

The OBF Vocal Fellows program has been canceled. The program paid emerging professional singers to come to Eugene and work with more-established pros. The Vocal Fellows would, for example, perform small solo parts in large choral concerts; those roles will now go to OBF chorus members.

“The Vocal Fellows initiative has always been about offering unique, high-quality opportunities for aspiring soloists,” Foley said. “In 2018, the nature of the proposed concert schedule and repertoire has led us back to a place where we will once again recruit directly from our immensely talented chorus. The decision is not about a budget cut or a cancellation of a program. It is about finding the best talent and providing more opportunities.”

The future of the OBF Master Conducting Class is uncertain. Long the backstage heart of the festival, the master conducting class brought emerging conductors from around the country to study under founding Artistic Director Helmut Rilling and, later, under Matthew Halls.

The student conductors would lead performances of the works they had studied in informal public concerts called the Discovery Series, last year named the (re)Discovery Series. Current plans are to continue the Discovery Series but cut the conducting class at least this year.

“The Conducting Master Class is likely to go on hiatus in 2018,” Foley confirmed.

The Discovery Series, he said, will continue in 2018 with a different focus. “The repertoire will be focused on Bach cantatas, and they will be presented in a lecture/demonstration type mode.”

Finally, the world premiere of *The Passion of Yeshua*, a new work commissioned by OBF from Richard Danielpour, is to go ahead as scheduled, as is a performance of Phillip Glass’ new *Piano Concerto No. 3*, with Simone Dinnerstein.

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