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## Birdfoot Festival appoints Rebecca Crenshaw as next Executive Director

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**New Orleans, LA** — After a rigorous search that attracted an international pool of applicants, Birdfoot Festival's Board of Directors is pleased to announce that **Rebecca Crenshaw** has been appointed as Birdfoot's Executive Director. The appointment marks a new chapter for the festival, in which Rebecca says she will "continue the transformational work Birdfoot has done to put chamber music at the forefront in New Orleans."

Birdfoot's Board was impressed by Rebecca's inspiring record of community building, arts advocacy, music education work in New Orleans, and her collaborative and process-oriented approach to addressing core strategic questions. The search committee also noted that Rebecca's background uniquely equips her, in her own words, to "understand the intricacies of the New Orleans music experience as well as the expansiveness of the international arts community." Rebecca's management and leadership experience is complemented by a commitment to community voice and impact that runs through everything she has done.

Rebecca comes to Birdfoot from her current role as the Louisiana Philharmonic Orchestra's Community and Engagement Manager where she directed and managed the orchestra's Music for Life program. She currently serves on the League of American Orchestras Education and Engagement Leadership Committee, and the Teaching Artists Guild National Advisory Committee. Rebecca is an alum of the Global Leaders Program, an executive graduate degree focused on social entrepreneurship and impact innovation and she previously worked within the New Orleans public schools, founding two string orchestra programs at Crocker Arts and Technology and then Homer Plessy Community School. She has additionally spent time performing, touring and recording as a musician herself with groups including Ever More Nest, Samantha Fish and Arcade Fire.

Reflecting on her appointment, Rebecca said, "I am thrilled to step into the role of Executive Director for the Birdfoot Festival. Building on the momentum of the past 10 years, Birdfoot is perfectly positioned to build on its unique spirit and innovative programming as we transition to a new, exciting chapter. With accessibility and engagement at the forefront, I look forward to continuing Birdfoot's transformational mission to facilitate inspiration and creativity in artists and audiences from New Orleans and beyond. I am honored to follow in the footsteps of founding Executive Director Tracey Sherry and inspired to work alongside founding Artistic Director Jenna Sherry."

Birdfoot Festival Board member and incoming Board President **Kurt Weigle** said, "Birdfoot is truly excited to welcome Rebecca to this position. Her expertise in community-based arts programming & education is a perfect fit for the Birdfoot ethos. She brings tremendous commitment, creativity and energy to the kind of work we do, and she is a musician on top of all of this. Rebecca understands the Birdfoot mission as if she had been here from our founding. I know she will lead Birdfoot to new heights."

Artistic Director **Jenna Sherry** reacted by saying, “I greatly look forward to working together with Rebecca Crenshaw to chart Birdfoot’s next chapter. The search process generated interest far beyond New Orleans and brought Birdfoot into conversation with strong and inspiring applicants from around the country and even abroad. Rebecca clearly and immediately stood out for her outside-the-box thinking, her perceptive ability to identify the questions that will animate Birdfoot’s next chapter, and her inclusive and process-driven approach to answering them. It is very exciting to welcome Rebecca to the Birdfoot team because she brings her own rich background and a fresh perspective and yet she is driven by the same questions and values that inspired Birdfoot’s founding.”

Board member **Geoffrey Hamlyn** commented that, "I am delighted to help welcome Rebecca Crenshaw to Birdfoot. Rebecca brings a deep love of the arts, passion for evolving organizations, and servant heart to this role. As a proven, energetic leader with deep connections to our region, Rebecca is uniquely qualified to meet this moment for Birdfoot. I am so excited to see how she helps take the organization to new and exciting places!"

Founding Executive Director **Tracey Sherry** said, “I greatly look forward to helping Rebecca transition into taking the helm, and to seeing the festival's next steps. I think she has exactly the energy, vision and abilities that Birdfoot needs going forward.”

### **About Birdfoot Festival**

Birdfoot Festival was founded on the principle that the dynamic musical culture of New Orleans—characterized by intimate music venues and a casual yet intense listening culture—has something to offer that the future of classical music needs. Birdfoot provides time and space for artists to do their best work, and then brings musicians and audiences together to share meaningful musical experiences.

Recognized for its fresh approach and “youthful, rule-bending style” (The Times-Picayune), Birdfoot is recognized in New Orleans and beyond for its creative programming, its collaborative and musician-responsive ethic, and its diverse audiences. Since its founding in 2011, the Birdfoot Festival has grown rapidly: the festival has presented more than 160 concerts and events, and the 2019 season featured eighteen public offerings, including twelve concerts in addition to lectures, symposia, and other supporting events. In 2021, Birdfoot produced an interactive digital season modeled after the festival’s signature “Birdfoot Backstage” that attracted audience members from across the country and three continents.

In addition to concerts and events, Birdfoot’s programs include an award-winning Young Artist Program, occasional Artist Residencies, and an online calendar of musical events in partnership with New Orleans Public Radio. Contrary to industry stereotypes, Birdfoot audiences often skew young (~55% between ages 18–55) and turn out for adventurous programming. At recent festivals, 10% of audience members were attending their first chamber music concert.

*Birdfoot’s mission is to empower artists, inspire audiences, and upend expectations.*

More information at [www.birdfootfestival.org](http://www.birdfootfestival.org)

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