

BAM remembers Board Chair Adam E. Max

July 28, 2020/Brooklyn, NY—The Brooklyn Academy of Music is deeply saddened by the loss of its esteemed board chair, Adam E. Max (1958-2020), who died on July 27 of cholangiocarcinoma (bile duct cancer), diagnosed last September. BAM chair since 2017, Max joined the board in 2003 and became co-vice chair in 2008. He led the institution with energy, humility, warmth, and humor.

Adam Max and his wife, Diane, became frequent BAM patrons in 1985 after receiving a membership as a wedding gift. Adam's enthusiasm for the institution grew into a deep commitment, reflected in his generosity, his relationships with board members, staff, and BAM artists, and his delight in BAM's engaged audiences.

BAM President Katy Clark said, "Adam's passing is a profound and untimely loss and we extend our deepest sympathies to Diane and their family. Adam was voracious in his appetite for solving problems and dreaming big. His knowledge and acumen were integral to plans to weather the impact of COVID-19 and his guidance will continue to inform our thinking and practice. Adam's devotion and generosity were deep, and his mark on our organization will have lasting resonance."

Adam provided BAM with leadership and continuity through a recent period of growth and change, including the transition to a new president, Katy Clark, and a new artistic team including Artistic Director David Binder, VP of Film and Strategic Programming Gina Duncan, and VP of Education and Community Engagement Coco Killingsworth. His guidance enabled the growth of BAM's endowment, the construction and opening of BAM Strong, plans for BAM Karen, and celebrations of departing longtime leaders Alan Fishman, Karen Brooks Hopkins, and Joseph V. Melillo. He strengthened board engagement and launched board training in Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI)—a process he undertook with passion and sincerity.

An active participant in the city's cultural life, Adam had longstanding philanthropic connections to culture, education, and social services. He was a trustee of St. Ann's Warehouse, the Bank Street College of Education, the Telluride Foundation, and formerly the Collegiate School. He also served as president of the Rita & Alex Hillman Foundation. Adam and Diane were Founding Sponsors of New-York Historical Society's annual Diane and Adam E. Max Conference on Women's History.

Adam Max served as a partner at The Jordan Company, a private equity firm he joined in 1986. He grew up in New York City, attending PS 166, the Bank Street School for Children, and the Collegiate School. He earned a BA in English and History from Brown University in 1981, with honors. Adam shared his family's love of the arts, teaching children's theater through college, participating in a street theater group in Boston and the Woolly Mammoth mime troupe in Portland. However, he once said, "In a moment of self-realization, I decided the role of enthusiastic audience member suited me best."

Among many wonderful memories of Adam Max, BAM executives and staff will recall his passion for food (desserts in particular), his on-stage participation in Geoff Sobelle's "Home" at the Harvey Theater, his gift of an annual staff shuffleboard/BBQ/ice cream party, his puns, his support of BAM's softball team (the BAMbinos), and his palpable love of life. Adam is survived by his wife, Diane, their children Hannah, Jonah, and Ezra, and his brothers Eric and Daniel.

Contact: Sandy Sawotka, ssawotka@BAM.org