



BAM Executive Producer Joseph V. Melillo to step down in Dec 2018, following a 34-year programming tenure at the institution

May 5, 2017/Brooklyn, NY—As part of a series of planned leadership transitions at Brooklyn Academy of Music (BAM), Joseph V. Melillo today announced that he will step down from his position as executive producer in December 2018—after devoting 34 years to the ascension of BAM as a leading performing arts center. As executive producer since 1999, Melillo has overseen BAM’s programming in theater, dance, music, visual art, and multi-disciplinary arts. Prior to 1999, Melillo served as BAM’s producing director. He joined the institution in 1983 as founding director of the Next Wave Festival—BAM’s signature annual contemporary arts showcase.

Melillo said, “My journey at BAM has been a remarkable one. I was privileged to work with some of the world’s most accomplished and inspiring artists and to nurture and support their careers. I experienced the astounding evolution of BAM and a renaissance of the borough of Brooklyn. Most rewarding was the opportunity to share a wide variety of global artistic innovation with our audiences over the course of many years. It has been a great honor to work with my professional and artistic colleagues in the execution of BAM’s mission.”

Joseph Melillo and former President Karen Brooks Hopkins took over the leadership of BAM in 1999 from Harvey Lichtenstein (then president and executive producer), under whom they worked for many years. Together they further solidified BAM’s role as a major force in the New York cultural scene, with a worldwide reputation for quality and innovation. Since 2015, Melillo has worked alongside President Katy Clark, planning new projects and institutional growth, and defining BAM’s role in a burgeoning Brooklyn Cultural District.

BAM President Katy Clark said, “Joe Melillo is not only a renowned and respected curator in our field, but his passion for the artists and their work is inspiring to all. He conveys a great generosity of spirit and warmth for his colleagues as well, and I’m grateful to have had the opportunity to work with him at BAM as I now embark on a search for his successor.”

BAM Chairman Adam E. Max added, “Joe’s departure from BAM brings to a conclusion a triumphant 30+ year tenure in which he established BAM and the Next Wave Festival in particular as the standard by which all other festivals and performing arts institutions are judged. He imparted a discerning taste that was based on innovation, quality, and artistic rigor. This is a moment of celebration for Joe and his achievements, all of which are deeply woven into the fabric of what we do.”

Upon fully taking BAM’s programming reins in 1999, Melillo continued to present new work from the adventurous artists closely associated with the organization, including Pina Bausch, Robert Wilson, William Christie, Peter Brook, Trisha Brown, Bill T. Jones, William Forsythe, and others. He expanded the artistic roster to include groundbreaking directors like Ivo van Hove, Thomas Ostermeier, Anne Bogart, and Emmanuel Demarcy-Mota; choreographers including Sasha Waltz and Hofesh Shechter; physical theater creators James Thierrée, Cirkus Cirkör, Aurélien Bory, and Circa; and puppet artistry by Zvi Sahar and Phantom Limb Company.

Melillo forged successful producing partnerships including The Bridge Project (with Neal Street Productions and the Old Vic)—an ambitious multi-year pairing of productions directed by Sam

Mendes, which toured worldwide; the ongoing RadioLoveFest with WNYC Radio; and the Brooklyn-Paris Exchange with Théâtre de la Ville. He curated a festival of Australian performing arts entitled Next Wave Down Under; presented Ralph Lemon's 10-year project, *Geography Trilogy*; and forged artistic relationships with the Young Vic and Royal Court Theatres. He commissioned music projects including Sufjan Stevens' *The BQE*, Gabriel Kahane's *The Ambassador*, and the *Crossing Brooklyn Ferry* festival curated by Bryce and Aaron Dessner. He presented contemporary opera including David Lang's *The Loser* and Mark Anthony Turnage's *Anna Nicole*; and explored an ongoing relationship with Nonesuch Records and its artists. Melillo has also expanded BAM's role in the field of visual arts.

Fulfilling a need he had expressed for many years, Melillo worked to construct and establish a smaller third stage for BAM, on which the organization could present both developing artists and established artists' experimental work—with affordable ticket prices. To that end, the BAM Fisher opened in 2012. In its 250-seat, highly-flexible Fishman Space, BAM has presented a wide variety of artists during its annual Next Wave Festival, including Geoff Sobelle, Miranda July, Nora Chipaumire, Thaddeus Philipps, Suzanne Bocanegra, Lars Jan, Marc Bamuthi Joseph, Martha Wilson, Ted Hearne, and The Civilians, among others.

In addition to events presented on the BAM campus, Melillo designed a cultural diplomacy program with the US State Department, *DanceMotion USASM*, in which participating American dance companies engage with international audiences in four-week-long residencies around the world. This resonant program, now planning its seventh season, features outreach events, workshops, master classes, and performances by leading dance companies from across the US. BAM will produce *DanceMotion USASM* through 2018.

For information about the executive search for Joseph Melillo's successor, please visit <http://www.bam.org/careers>

Joseph V. Melillo's honors and professional associations:

- In 2004, Melillo was awarded an honorary OBE for his outstanding commitment to British performing arts in America.
- Melillo was recognized by the French government as a Chevalier (1999) and an Officier (2004) de l'ordre des Arts et des Lettres.
- He was appointed Knight of the Royal Order of the Polar Star in 2007 in recognition of his role in solidifying ties between the performing arts communities of Sweden and the United States.
- In 2012, he was named cultural ambassador for Taiwan in recognition of his efforts to bring the arts of Taiwan to the US.
- Melillo was awarded an honorary Doctorate of Humane Letters in 2012 from St. Francis College, Brooklyn, NY.
- He received the Guadium Award from the Breukelein Institute in 2012.

- Melillo and colleagues received a 2013 National Medal of Arts for BAM, from President Barack Obama.
- He was awarded the title of Knight of the National Order of Québec in 2016.

Melillo has served on the faculty of the Brooklyn College Graduate Program in Arts Management and on the boards of directors for the Association of Performing Arts Presenters (APAP) and En Garde Arts. He was a panelist for the National Endowment of the Arts Dance Program and the New York State Council on the Arts, and served as Multidisciplinary Panel Chair of the Pew Fellowships in the Arts' 2003 and 2007 Awards. Melillo is on the US Nominating Committee for the Praemium Imperiale, a global arts prize awarded annually by the Japan Art Association. He is a lecturer at colleges and universities nationally and internationally. He currently serves as a member of the International Arts Advisory Committee for the Wexner Prize (Wexner Center for the Arts). Melillo earned a Bachelor of Arts degree in English and theater at Sacred Heart University in Fairfield, Connecticut and a Masters of Fine Arts in speech and drama at Catholic University of America in Washington, DC.

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