



For Immediate Release  
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### **APAP Announces CEO Departure in 2020 *Search Committee to Undertake Search Process***

November 6, 2019 – The Association of Performing Arts Professionals (APAP) today announced that its CEO and President Mario Garcia Durham will be leaving the organization in April 2020, as his current contract comes to an end. Mr. Durham became the fifth President and CEO of APAP in 2011 since its founding in 1957. Under his leadership, the APAP membership has continued to thrive and remain strong. APAP has continued to work successfully with foundations, establishing important initiatives that fuel innovative professional development programs for emerging industry leaders and providing resources, knowledge sharing, training and collaboration to those looking to advance their organizational missions. He has also built one of the strongest peer boards in the industry, reflecting a time in which our field, membership and organizational values have required a strong willingness to work together for positive change. In this vein, he's also helped shape the industry's focus on taking action in the areas of equity, diversity and inclusion in building strong organizations.

Mr. Durham leaves the organization on solid financial footing. APAP's flagship conference, [APAP|NYC](#), maintains its indispensable place as the premiere performing arts event for networking and showcasing in North America. As part of an ongoing effort to raise visibility around the arts-related activities that converge in New York City every January in tandem with the conference, he established a partnership with the NYC Mayor's Office of Media and Entertainment effort now known as [JanArtsNYC](#), which has elevated both APAP|NYC and JanArtsNYC partner events.

The APAP board is forming a search committee, and the search process is underway to find the next CEO and President of APAP; more details to be announced soon. Mr. Durham, the APAP board, and staff are committed to a smooth transition for the organization.

“It has been my privilege and pleasure to serve on the APAP board, and subsequently as its Chair, with Mario at the helm of this organization. Our professional relationship goes back over 25 years, and I continue to admire Mario’s leadership abilities, expansive embrace of all facets of our field, and generosity of spirit. APAP is stronger and more innovative, energized, and inclusive because of his leadership,” said Karen A. Fischer, Chair of the APAP board. “We will miss him tremendously. At the same time, the thoughtful and strategic timing of this transition opens up exciting opportunities for the next CEO as APAP is just embarking on its new strategic plan initiatives.”

“I’ve thoroughly enjoyed my time at APAP, not only in leading this organization during a critical time in our industry, but also in working with a diverse, talented and dynamic staff and board that have allowed me to serve this community in a thriving manner,” said Mario Garcia Durham, President and CEO of APAP. “I’ve always believed that part of being a good leader is not only by ensuring the health and future success of an organization, but also by anticipating leadership change as a way to secure opportunities for an organization’s growth and transformation. I am excited to see what this new chapter for APAP brings our members.”

Prior to his leadership role with APAP, Mr. Durham was at the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) where he served as Director of Artist Communities & Presenting from 2004–2011. At the NEA, Mr. Durham contributed to programs such as the NEA Opera Honors and An Evening of Poetry, hosted by the President and Mrs. Obama. He inaugurated the NEA’s Artist Communities granting program and was the initiator of Live from Your Neighborhood, a groundbreaking study of the impact of outdoor arts festivals in the U.S. After holding numerous management positions at the Yerba Buena Center for the Arts in the 1990s, in 2000 he founded Yerba Buena Arts & Events, the producing organization of the annual Yerba Buena Gardens Festival. The outdoor event offers more than 100 free performances by the San Francisco Opera, the San Francisco Ballet and more for an audience of 100,000 attendees.

Throughout his career of more than 20 years as a performing arts professional, Mr. Durham has served on numerous boards, special advisory committees and funding panels. He is currently chair of the board of the Alliance of Artist Communities. Durham serves as the vice chair of the Performing Arts Alliance, a board of the leaders of the major performing arts service organizations in the U.S. He is also on the Advisory Committee of SMU DataArts, the Community Advisory Council of the PBS station WETA in Washington, DC, and the American University Arts Management Advisory Council. A graduate of the University of Houston, Durham is passionate about a broad range of performing arts and evolving forms of performance and media arts.

Mr. Durham is not retiring. He plans to continue to contribute to the performing arts field and to stay closely connected to the industry.

About APAP, the Association of Performing Arts Professionals

APAP, the Association of Performing Arts Professionals, based in Washington, D.C., is the national service, advocacy and membership organization dedicated to developing and supporting a robust, performing arts presenting field and the professionals who work within it. Our 1,600 national and international members represent leading performing arts centers, municipal and university performance facilities, nonprofit performing arts centers, culturally specific organizations, foreign governments, as well as artist agencies, managers, touring companies, and national consulting practices that serve the field, and a growing roster of self-presenting artists. As a leader in the field, APAP works to effect change through advocacy, professional development, resource sharing and civic engagement. APAP is a nonprofit 501(c)3 organization governed by a volunteer board of directors and led by President and CEO Mario Garcia Durham. In addition to presenting the annual APAP|NYC conference—the world's leading gathering and marketplace for the performing arts (Jan. 10-14, 2020)—APAP continues to be the industry's leading resource, knowledge and networking destination for the advancement of performing arts presenting.

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