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Contact:

Jenny Thomas
Director, Marketing and Communications
jthomas@apap365.org

Toshi Reagon, Creating New Futures, National Independent Venue Association, The Public Theater, and Mario Garcia Durham named recipients of 2021 APAP Awards

Senator Amy Klobuchar remains “optimistic” that the arts will get stronger. APAP to “lead the field forward as we renew and reimagine ourselves.”

(Washington, DC) May 7, 2021 – The Association of Performing Arts Professionals (APAP) honored artists, advocates, visionaries and leaders---both individuals and organizations---at **The APAP Honors---which took place on Thursday, May 6, 2021**. Fifty-three performing arts professionals and organizations were nominated by APAP members for the awards and represent the breadth and depth of the performing arts presenting, booking and touring field at this moment. To watch the replay, visit [here](#).

While this year’s event was remarkable as APAP’s first *virtual* awards ceremony, **APAP President and CEO Lisa Richards Toney** asserts that it is also remarkable because of the times. She rallied the online audience.

We are celebrating the achievements of performing arts industry professionals at a time where our championing and support are integral to our survival and the incredible impact we have on individuals and communities. In honoring our own, we remember who we are and are inspired to proclaim why our and YOUR work---in advocacy, in programming, in artistry, and in service---matters!

“APAP’s role, leadership and mission as a service organization have never been more important,” she continues.

We found ourselves uniquely positioned as a membership organization to hold up a sturdy (yet flexible) big tent for the wide ranging and diverse membership ... APAP at its core, its vision is to bring together supporters of the live performing arts to embrace a movement that APAP is shouldering to lead the field forward as we renew and reimagine ourselves.

Special guest **Senator Amy Klobuchar** addressed attendees in an uplifting video message.



This pandemic has been tough especially on everyone who works in the arts, so many artists lost work, and all the jobs associated with it, and performance venues that are usually so full of life, have had to sit empty. At the same time, we've seen this incredible love for the arts because people have been so isolated ... So I am still so optimistic that we're going to get through this and get even stronger.

Musician **Toshi Reagon** delivered a rousing acceptance speech for The Award of Merit.

I never imagined I'd get to represent our year, this year, 2021. Can it say that we were in a pandemic and carried on with effort and transformation? Can it say that death came too fast for so many of our people? Can it say that we could see how much limitation we put on opening our circles through the lens of a pandemic and the uprising and the race to end the reign of violence, thievery, and injustice by elected officials and reclaim our responsibility for our collective living in planet Earth? We are next in line, and when I look back on the pathway of so many incredible creators connected in this ever-expanding APAP circle, my heart is filled with assurity of abundant creativity all around.

Reagon was one of the 2021 APAP Award honorees announced at The APAP Honors. The event also celebrated the recipients of the Annual NAPAMA Awards and the Halsey & Alice North Board Alumni Award.

THE SIDNEY R. YATES AWARD FOR OUTSTANDING ADVOCACY ON BEHALF OF THE PERFORMING ARTS:

Two honorees were named:

- **Creating New Futures: Working Guidelines for Ethics & Equity in Presenting Dance & Performance**
- **National Independent Venue Association – NIVA** (Dayna Frank, Board President/Co-Founder, and Reverend Moose, Executive Director/Co-Founder)

THE WILLIAM DAWSON AWARD FOR PROGRAMMATIC EXCELLENCE AND SUSTAINED ACHIEVEMENT IN PROGRAMMING:

The Public Theater (Oskar Eustis, Artistic Director, and Patrick Willingham, Executive Director)

THE AWARD OF MERIT FOR ACHIEVEMENT IN THE PERFORMING ARTS:

Toshi Reagon, musician, composer, curator and producer



FAN TAYLOR DISTINGUISHED SERVICE AWARD FOR EXEMPLARY SERVICE TO THE FIELD OF PROFESSIONAL PRESENTING:

Mario Garcia Durham, arts administrator, educator

The following award was announced in advance and honored at the ceremony.

THE HALSEY & ALICE NORTH BOARD ALUMNI AWARD: **Olga Garay-English**, an independent arts consultant and is Senior Advisor for International Affairs to Fundación Teatro a Mil.

Announced in January, this year's NAPAMA (North American Performing Arts Managers and Agents) award recipients were recognized at the ceremony by Gail Boyd, President, NAPAMA:

- NAPAMA PRESENTER OF THE YEAR: **Hollis Ashby**, Artistic and Executive Director, Williams Center for the Arts
- NAPAMA LIZ SILVERSTEIN AWARD FOR AGENT-MANAGER OF THE YEAR: **Kevin Spencer**, Self-Represented Artist, Educator and Advocate, Hocus Focus, Inc.

BIOGRAPHIES

Creating New Futures: Working Guidelines for Ethics & Equity in Presenting Dance & Performance – Yates Award

Creating New Futures (CNF) began as a document to address the deep-rooted inequities in the performance field that were amplified by the global pandemic. The project's call to action is "to create a more equitable and inclusive dance & performance ecosystem, in which everyone can thrive." Now in Phase 2, CNF is currently formed into working groups that center BIPOC and Disabled+ lives including: Disability+, Black & Indigenous Survivors, Intersectional Riders, and Contracts. www.creatingnewfutures.info

National Independent Venue Association (NIVA) – Yates Award

Formed at the onset of the COVID-19 shutdown, the National Independent Venue Association (NIVA), now represents more than 3,000 venues, promoters, and festivals in all 50 states and Washington, D.C. NIVA, a 501(c)6, created and led the #SaveOurStages campaign, resulting in landmark legislation establishing the "Shuttered Venue Operators" Grant program to be administered by the Small Business Administration. NIVA's mission is to preserve and nurture the ecosystem of independent live venues, promoters and festivals throughout the United States. The National



Independent Venue Foundation (NIVF) was founded as a 501(c)3 to further this mission by also seeking to support a transparent, competitive marketplace serving a diverse and inclusive community of artists, fans, and industry workers. The NIVA Emergency Relief Fund directly supports the preservation of the independent live entertainment ecosystem that presents music, comedy, and the performing arts, helping these critical spaces survive through the Coronavirus pandemic. Individuals, foundations, businesses, and organizations that are interested in financially supporting NIVA, NIVF, or the NIVA Emergency Relief Fund should visit nivassoc.org/donate.—NIVA is committed to equity in its support and advocacy for independent venues, and seeks to create and encourage opportunities for venues, promoters, and festivals owned, operated, and staffed by people of color, women, non-binary, LGBTQ+, veterans, and people with disabilities.

The Public Theater – Dawson Award

The Public is theater of, by, and for all people. The Public continues the work of founder Joe Papp as a civic institution engaging with some of the most important ideas and social issues of today. Under the leadership of Artistic Director Oskar Eustis and Executive Director Patrick Willingham, The Public’s programming includes new work at its Astor Place home, Free Shakespeare in the Park, Mobile Unit, Public Forum, Under the Radar, Public Works, Public Shakespeare Initiative, #BARS, and Joe’s Pub. The Public is currently represented on Broadway by the acclaimed musicals, *Hamilton* and *Girl from the North Country*. Recipient of 59 Tonys, 184 Obies, 55 Drama Desks, 58 Lortels, 34 OCCs, 13 NY Drama Critics, 56 AUDELCO Awards, 6 Antonyo Awards, and 6 Pulitzer Prizes. publictheater.org

Toshi Reagon – Award of Merit

Toshi Reagon is a one-woman celebration of all that’s dynamic, progressive and uplifting in American music. Since first taking to the stage at age 17, this versatile singer-songwriter-guitarist has moved audiences of all kinds with her big-hearted, hold-nothing-back approach to rock, blues, R&B, country, folk, spirituals and funk. The New York Times described her blend as “...a love of mixing things up...[her] vocal style ranges from a dirty blues moan to a gospel shout to an ethereal croon.” Her live performances, in particular, aren’t just accessible; they’re irresistible. And Toshi Reagon loves her audiences. Leading her renowned band—BIGLovely, launched in 1996—she instantly connects, inspires and empowers.

Over nearly 30 years, Reagon has collaborated with top innovators across a wide spectrum of the entertainment field. Since Lenny Kravitz chose her, straight out of college, to open for him on his first world tour, she has gone on to share stages with Nona Hendryx, Elvis Costello, Ani DiFranco, Pete Seeger, Dar Williams, Lizz Wright, Me’shell NdegéOcello and Marc Anthony Thompson (aka Chocolate Genius). Her



performances with her mother, Bernice Johnson Reagon---civil rights activist and founder of the a cappella group, Sweet Honey in the Rock---are legendary.

Toshi Reagon composed and served as musical director for *Bones* and *Ash: A Gilda Story*, a production by the acclaimed Urban Bush Women dance troupe. She has also scored dance works by LAVA and by the Jane Comfort Dance Company. Her musical work has been featured in film (*The Secret Life of Bees*) and television (PBS/WGBH's *Africans in America*, *The L Word*, *Crossing Jordan*, *House* and HBO's award-winning *Beah: A Black Woman Speaks*, produced by Jonathan Demme and LisaGay Hamilton). She collaborated, as conductor, musician and instrumental composer/arranger, with director Robert Wilson and with Bernice Johnson Reagon on a Gustave Flaubert-inspired opera, *The Temptation of St. Anthony*, which toured throughout Europe.

Reagon's *Parable of the Sower* rock-opera, based on the novel by Octavia Butler, had its world premiere at NYU Abu Dhabi Arts Center in fall 2017. Shortly after, the US premiere was performed at Carolina Performing Arts at UNC-Chapel Hill, where Reagon was also an artist in residence. The performance, created and written by Toshi Reagon and Bernice Reagon, and directed by Eric Ting, included over 20 singers, actors, and musicians. Reagon has been a big fan of Octavia Butler's works and her themes of Afrofuturism and the eerily similar political climates led Reagon to create the opera.

One of several women honored by the National Women's History Project, she has been recognized for "amazing intelligence, talent, courage and tenacity [that testify] to the myriad ways that generations of women have moved history forward."

Mario Garcia Durham – Fan Taylor Award

From October 2011 until June 2020, Mario Garcia Durham served as the fifth President and CEO of the Association of Performing Arts Professionals (APAP). Currently, he is adjunct faculty in the Arts Administration graduate program at George Mason University. In addition, Mr. Durham is the President of the board of the Alliance of Artists Communities and sits on the board of The Sitar Center in Washington, DC. He serves on the Advisory Committee of SMU DataArts and is the leader of the newly formed National Outdoor Arts Group. He is also part of a team bringing a major international Outdoor Arts Exhibit called *Alebrijes de Oaxaca* to cities across the U.S.

Prior to his leadership role with APAP, Durham served at the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) as Director of Artist Communities & Presenting from 2004-2011, where, in addition to overseeing funding programs, he was instrumental in agency initiatives, such as the NEA Opera Honors and An Evening of Poetry, hosted by 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 on the impact of outdoor arts festivals in the U.S. Prior to the NEA, he held numerous management positions at San Francisco's Yerba Buena Center for the Arts where, in 2000, he founded Yerba Buena Arts & Events, the producing organization of the annual Yerba Buena Gardens Festival. This 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 30 years as a performing arts professional, Durham has served on numerous boards, special advisory committees and funding panels. He is proud to have served as the chair of the Performing Arts Alliance, which is comprised of leaders of the major performing arts service organizations in the U.S. A graduate of the University of Houston, Durham is passionate and knowledgeable about a broad range of performing arts and evolving forms of performance and media arts.

Olga Garay-English – North Award

Olga Garay-English, an independent arts consultant, is Senior Advisor for International Affairs to Fundación Teatro a Mil in Santiago, Chile, the producer of the three-week Festival Internacional Santiago a Mil. In 2016, she became Executive Director of the historic Ford Theatres, a 1,200-seat amphitheatre in the Hollywood Hills for three-years before the Los Angeles Philharmonic assumed its management. Olga was Executive Director of the City of Los Angeles Department of Cultural Affairs. During her tenure at the City, DCA and its programs were awarded more than \$23 million in funding from private and public entities (2007-2014). As founding Program Director for the Arts of the Doris Duke Charitable Foundation (1998-2005), she awarded \$145 million to U.S.-based and international arts organizations. Ms. Garay-English became a Chevalier dans l'Ordre des Arts et Lettres in 2012. Awarded a "Bessie," the New York Dance and Performance Awards, for sustained contribution to the field – 2006. Fan Taylor Distinguished Service Award, Association of Performing Arts Presenters – 2003. Born in Santa Clara, Cuba, she became a naturalized United States citizen in 1978. She is the widow of Dr. Kerry English, a developmental pediatrician who dedicated his life to serving abused and foster children in South Los Angeles.

About The APAP Honors and APAP Awards

For more information about The APAP Honors and APAP Awards, including past award recipients, visit <https://www.apap365.org/Programs/APAP-Honors-2021>.

Charitable contributions to support much-needed APAP programs and resources are welcome. **To make a donation to APAP, visit [here](#).**

The APAP Honors is sponsored by IMG Artists (<https://imgartists.com/>). Learn more about APAP event sponsorship here: <https://www.apap365.org/About/Advertising-and-Sponsorship>.



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 1,700 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. 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 Lisa Richards Toney** (<https://www.apap365.org/About/Who-We-Are/Staff/Lisa-Richards-Toney>). In addition to presenting the annual APAP|NYC conference—the world's leading gathering and marketplace for the performing arts—APAP continues to be the industry's leading resource, knowledge and networking destination for the advancement of performing arts presenting, booking and touring. For more information, visit <https://www.apap365.org>.

About NAPAMA

NAPAMA, the North American Performing Arts Managers and Agents, promotes the best interests of professionals engaged in the touring of the performing arts through building and sharing knowledge, advocacy, leadership, and innovation. Committed to the core values of equity, diversity and inclusion, NAPAMA provides members with a platform for networking, communication, information exchange, resource identification, trends in the field, research, and best practices.

About The North Group, Inc.

Halsey and Alice North headed The North Group Inc. from 1987 to 2018, providing an integrated approach to planning, board development, and fundraising for nonprofit performing arts centers and historic theaters across the country. They have been active in APAP as board members, teachers, volunteers, board emeritus, honorary lifetime members, fundraisers, and donors. Halsey was honored with the Fan Taylor Award in 1988. Halsey and Alice were the first recipients of the Halsey & Alice North Award in 2013 in recognition of their commitment to APAP and their leadership in the field.