

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR JACOBA KNAAPEN STEPPING DOWN FROM THE TORONTO ALLIANCE FOR THE PERFORMING ARTS

Toronto, ON (May 29, 2024) —The [TAPA](#) and [PAIS](#) Board of Directors announced today that, after an incredible 21-year journey of unwavering dedication and service, **Jacoba Knaapen** has decided to step down from her role as Executive Director at the Toronto Alliance for the Performing Arts (TAPA) at the end of December 2024.

Michael Sinclair TAPA Board President commented, “Jacoba's tenure at TAPA has been marked by outstanding achievements and unwavering commitment to advancing the performing arts landscape in Toronto. Her visionary leadership and integrity have left an indelible mark, shaping the trajectory of TAPA and the broader arts community. Jacoba's departure marks the end of a remarkable chapter in TAPA history. We extend our deepest gratitude to Jacoba for her years of service and wish her all the best in her future endeavours.”

Jacoba has worked tirelessly and leaves a profound legacy of impactful programs and services. She established TRIP (Travel, Retreat Initiative Program), providing travel assistance to hundreds of artists, the TAPA TRADE SERIES, offering workshops and training, the JON KAPLAN AUDIENCE CHOICE AWARD, the LEONARD McHARDY and JOHN HARVEY AWARD, and most recently, the RAY FERRIS INNOVATION AND SUSTAINABILITY GRANT. Jacoba's passion for supporting youth and creating access points to culture across the GTA has helped to grow the next generation of Toronto audiences. Her legacy includes hipTIX, an affordable ticketing program that has touched the lives of over 30,000 youth in Toronto.

Jacoba's tenure is also marked by her strong advocacy for the performing arts. Her development of the *TAPA Stats Reports* and the *TAPA Audience Report*, which have been instrumental in identifying and quantifying industry trends and audience behaviour, is a testament to her dedication. As a champion for the arts, she has mobilized, advocated for, and supported arts workers and organizations throughout Toronto. Her founding of the municipal ARTS DAY AT THE CITY and her leadership in government relations have led to significant policy changes in Toronto. Her role as the outgoing Chair of ARTSVOTE, and her production of four Mayoral Arts Debates from 2010 to 2023, have become a staple part of municipal arts advocacy.

Jacoba Knaapen reflected, “I am deeply grateful to the dedicated TAPA team members, both past and present, who have worked alongside me. I extend my heartfelt thanks to all who have served on the TAPA and PAIS Boards of Directors, forming the brain trust that drives our activities. This is a transformational time for TAPA, marked by our move to B Street, where we offer affordable and accessible creation spaces. Since launching our new Strategic Plan at the AGM last November, TAPA has been on an exciting upward trajectory. As I step down, I am confident that this is the perfect moment for new leadership to guide the organization into its promising future.”

As the long-time Producer of the *Dora Mavor Moore Awards*, Canada's largest and oldest theatre award show, Jacoba's commitment to equity and inclusivity has been unwavering and led the DORAS to become the first professional theatre award show in Canada to make the ground-breaking change to gender-inclusive awards.

PAIS Board President Chris Goddard remarked, "Jacoba's unwavering dedication to motivating her colleagues and collaborators has made a difference. From my perspective, witnessing her exceptional leadership at TAPA has been inspiring and enlightening. Her ability to foster loyalty within her team has undoubtedly played a crucial role in the success of TAPA. Moreover, her commitment to mentoring others

Board of Directors

Michael Sinclair
President

William Milne
Treasurer

Natalie Sandassie
Secretary

Chris Goddard
P.A.I.S. Board
President

Gideon Arthurs
Lisa Marie DiLiberto
Lucy Eveleigh
Indrit Kasapi
Kevin Ormsby
Gloria Mok
Victor Pokinko
Colin Rivers
Gerard Roxburgh

and nurturing them into future arts leaders speaks volumes about her profound impact and lasting legacy. Working alongside Jacoba has been an absolute pleasure! She embodies the essence of a brilliant leader in every sense."

Jacoba has worked in the arts and culture industry for over four decades, and she has served on numerous committees, stewarding countless advisories and working groups. Her dedication and contributions to the arts have been recognized with numerous awards, including the Toronto Arts Foundation's *Margo Bindhart and Rita Davies Cultural Leadership Award*, a *Harold Award* for her mentorship to the Independent Theatre community, a *Vital People Award* from The Toronto Community Foundation, and most recently, the *Equity Showcase Cayle Chernin Woman of the Year Award* in 2023.

The Board of Directors is mindful of the organizational memory Jacoba holds. In celebrating her leadership at TAPA and her long-time contribution to the arts community in Toronto, TAPA has considered succession planning in her departure. Part of the process to ensure a smooth transition includes creating a Search Committee to secure the new Executive Director at TAPA, comprised of Chris Goddard, Michael Sinclair, and other members of the broader community. The position description and details will be posted later this Spring.

XX

About Toronto Alliance for the Performing Arts (TAPA)

The Dora Mavor Moore Awards are administered by the Toronto Alliance for the Performing Arts (TAPA). In addition to the Doras, other programs and services provided by TAPA include: Annual Arts Day at the City, hipTIX (offering \$10 tickets to students between the ages of 14 and 29), TAPA RBC Emerging Artists Mentorship Program (TREAM), the Ray Ferris Innovation and Sustainability Grant and the professional development TAPA Trade Series.

www.tapa.ca

Media Requests

DMPUBLIC | Deanne Moser | deanne@dmpublic.com | 647 888 9388