



The Time is Right

Baylin Artists Management to sunset after the 2020/21 season

[DOYLESTOWN, PA February 6, 2020] In November 1999, the Shakers of Sabbathday Lake, Maine joined the Boston Camerata on stage at Lincoln Center in New York City, performing traditional Shaker chants and spirituals that the two groups had previously recorded together. A community that at its peak numbered close to five thousand members, there were only seven Shakers remaining by the end of the twentieth century, and they made three rare public performances with the Camerata at Lincoln Center in New York, at the University of Vermont, and in Chicago. Austin Baer wrote in *The Atlantic* that “[the Shakers’] homespun delivery contrasts touchingly with the tactful, unaffected polish of the professionals.”

These bittersweet, never-to-be-repeated performances came about through the efforts of Marc Baylin and his then relatively new agency, Baylin Artists Management, founded in 1993. After 28 years with his own firm and 36 years in the artist management business, Baylin Artists will sunset operations in June 2021.



“I was in college on Tuesday and working in artist management on Wednesday,” Baylin says of the start of his career. His first job was at a Philadelphia-based artist management company, but after eight years, at the age of 30, “I decided that if I were ever going to have my own business, I better get going.”

It wasn’t exactly smooth sailing at the beginning. An artist manager without artists to manage, Baylin first tried getting his own table at one of the conferences he had been attending for years at his previous job. “I tried to go to my first conference and take an exhibit space, but they said, ‘No, you really have to have artists if you’re going to have a table,’” Baylin laughs.

The artists would come in time, of course, but what Baylin possessed from the beginning were strong relationships with presenters and performing arts centers, and a keen instinct for brokering collaborations and building unique projects.

While his very first artists were almost exclusively classical and chamber musicians, Baylin would broaden his base of clients to include theater, dance, and world music. Over time, the firm represented a wide range of notable artists and companies including The Suzanne Farrell Ballet, the Iceland Dance Company, and PHILADANCO, the Bang On a Can All-Stars and Turtle Island Quartet, and projects with the actors Julian Sands, Jasmine Guy, and the late Kim Hunter. For Baylin, broadening the roster was a strategic decision, looking past a single genre but always hoping to maintain authenticity.

“I really wanted it to reflect my personal interests because if I was personally moved by whatever it was the artist did, it was more likely I could be passionate when talking about it.”

In addition to the Boston Camerata tour with the Shakers, some of Baylin’s career highlights include facilitating the first-ever American tours for multiple international artists and ensembles, such as the UK’s Theatre Re and their production “The Nature of Forgetting,” touching on dementia, family, and memory; Circo Aereo from Finland; Cirk La Putyka from the Czech Republic; Nobuntu from Zimbabwe; and the Art of Time Ensemble from Canada. He also facilitated commissioning projects with composers Michael Daugherty, Anthony Davis, Joe Lovano, and Julia Wolfe. A collaboration between the Turtle Island Quartet and the Ying Quartet, commissioned by the Lied Center of Kansas, resulted in a Grammy Award.

Baylin brought commissioners together for a script on the legacy of Robert F. Kennedy, which resulted in a national tour by LA Theatre Works. His first project with LATW was *The Great Tennessee Monkey Trial* by Peter Goodchild, based on the 1925 Scopes trial transcripts. The tour coincided with the national debate addressing the intersection of science and religion.

Just as Baylin’s decision to open his business was born out of a desire to start something new that he could grow, his decision to bring it to a close now stems from a proactive need to figure out his next chapter on his own terms. The possibilities remain tantalizingly ambiguous, and include remaining in the industry, consulting, teaching, or something completely different. But retirement is the last thing on Baylin’s mind.

Even though this felt like the right time for Baylin to make this transition, his decision was not an easy one: some clients have been with him for more than 20 years, and feel like family. His main priority for now is building a robust 2020/21 season for his artists, which will include major tours of The Alehouse Sessions from Oslo, Theatre Re, Aquila Theatre, LA Theatre Works, Cirque Mechanics, Nobuntu, Julie Fowlis, and the rest.

“Part of the great joy of participating in a business like this, aside from the incredibly creative people that surround you, is finding projects that nobody else can find or getting there before someone else does,” says Baylin. “I won’t take any credit for creating the art, but we are responsible for putting certain projects out into the world that maybe wouldn’t have happened. It was effort and time well spent and very fulfilling.”

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