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MAKE MUSIC NEW YORK ANNOUNCES JAMES BURKE AS NEW EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

The Board of Directors of **Make Music New York** is pleased to announce that **James Burke** has been named Executive Director of the organization, effective immediately. James has more than fifteen years of experience as a performing arts executive and a special passion for producing innovative, community-based programs in public settings throughout the City of New York. He succeeds outgoing ED Jenny Undercofler, who now joins Make Music New York's Board of Directors as its Education Manager.

From 2001 through 2013, James worked at City Parks Foundation, NYC's largest producer of free outdoor music, dance, theater and kids' programs, including the renowned Central Park SummerStage festival. As Director of Arts and Cultural Programs (2007-13), he and his team rebranded and expanded SummerStage to incorporate all five boroughs. Under his leadership, the City Parks Foundation spearheaded dozens of multidisciplinary commissions, strengthened relationships with local community groups and public sector agencies, and forged partnerships with The Metropolitan Opera, The New York Pops and The Joyce Theater. Additionally, he played a leading role in expanding the scope and audience of the popular Charlie Parker Jazz Festival; in developing original content for television and the Web, including Live from Central Park SummerStage; and in facilitating community input that informed the design and construction of the Richard Rogers Amphitheater in Marcus Garvey Park and empowered grants to Harlem-based artists and presenters.

James recently returned to New York after two years as the Executive Director of the Westhampton Beach Performing Arts Center, a not-for-profit theater and arts academy serving Long Island's East End.

Said James, "I am thrilled to join Make Music New York because I deeply believe in its mission to inspire and unite New Yorkers and activate our city's public spaces each summer and winter solstice through the celebration of music. Empowering musical passions, connecting performers, engaging new audiences and cultural placemaking are all hugely important and rewarding goals, and for ten years Make Music New York has accomplished them with a unique ethos: its festivities are inclusive, ambitious, unpredictable and fun. I can't wait to contribute my expertise and to work with founder Aaron Friedman and the rest of the Board in extending the Make Music New York legacy into the next decade."

"After a thorough search, we are delighted to welcome James as our new Executive Director," said Aaron Friedman, Make Music New York's founder and Board Chair. "Since 2001, James has brought thousands of diverse music programs to every corner of the city, including a string of exceptional Make Music New York events in Central Park each June 21st. He is the perfect choice to lead this vast, collaborative, creative outpouring of music and community. The Board looks forward to working with James to expand our musical celebrations and deepen their impact."

Prior to 2001, James worked in sales, marketing and promotions for a variety of music industry trendsetters, including Paradigm Associated Labels, Caroline Distribution, CMJ Music Marathon and Reel to Reel Records. An avid musician since his teens (bass, guitar, vocals), he recorded and toured with post-punk band Idle, pop-Americana outfit Driver X, alt-roots band The Royal Wylds and as a solo artist. He is a graduate of Boston College and an alumnus of Coro Leadership New York, class of XVII. He lives with his wife and three children in Astoria, Queens.

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