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L.A. Business Leader and Philanthropist Robert J. Abernethy Named New Chair of The Music Center Board of Directors

Long-time Board Members of L.A.'s Performing Arts Center Cary Lefton and Darrell D. Miller Named Vice Chairs Plus Four Esteemed Business and Community Leaders Join Its Board: Romesh Anketell, Ronnie Kaplan, Thomas Safran and Jason Subotky

LOS ANGELES (June 26, 2025) -- The Board of Directors of **The Music Center** today announced the appointment of **Robert J. Abernethy**, founder and president of American Standard Development Company and Self Storage Management Company, as its new chair. Serving on The Music Center Board for 22 years, Abernethy was named to this role at the board's Annual Meeting on June 25, 2025; his term begins on July 1, 2025. Abernethy succeeds Cindy Miscikowski, who held the position of board chair since 2019; Miscikowski remains on The Music Center Board as member at-large. Joining Abernethy in leadership positions on the board are current Board Members **Cary Lefton** and **Darrell D. Miller**, who have been named vice chairs. Lefton has served on the board for nine years and currently chairs its Operations and Facilities Committee; Miller has served on the board for 11 years and chairs the board's Nominating and Governance Committee. **Diane Medina** and **Sue Wegleitner** will continue in their roles as secretary and treasurer, respectively.

As one of the nation's largest performing arts organizations, The Music Center presents world-class dance performances, nationally recognized K-12 arts learning programs, digital arts experiences and free and low-cost public concerts and events. The Music Center also manages an expansive campus, which includes four theatres, Jerry Moss Plaza and Gloria Molina Grand Park, comprising \$3 billion in assets, on behalf of the County of Los Angeles.

"It is a tremendous honor to be named chair of The Music Center's Board of Directors, an institution I have been proud to support for more than two decades," said Abernethy. "The Music Center is a cornerstone of arts and culture in Los Angeles, and I am deeply committed to helping it thrive as an inclusive, inspiring and forward-looking destination for all Angelenos. I am excited to partner with my fellow board members, The Music Center's exceptional executive team and staff and our resident companies to expand the reach and impact of the arts across Los Angeles County and steward the organization's legacy into the future."

The Music Center Board has also inducted four prominent business and community leaders as new members: **Romesh Anketell**, program officer of The Ralph M. Parsons Foundation; financial executive **Ronnie Kaplan**; and affordable housing developer **Thomas Safran**, who rejoins the Board after a 10-year hiatus. **Jason Subotky** joins The Music Center Board as designee for the LA Phil, one of The Music Center's resident company partners, for which he currently serves as board chair.

"We are thrilled to welcome this remarkable group of new and returning board members whose deep passion for the arts and unwavering commitment to community will help shape The Music Center in powerful ways. Each of them brings a unique blend of professional excellence, civic spirit and the empowering belief in the transformative power of the performing arts," added Abernethy. "Their energy, insight and leadership will help us, as a collective board, to continue expanding access, deepening engagement and inspiring Angelenos across all communities with the singular purpose of enriching the cultural lives of every resident. The Music Center will not only thrive under our watch--it will also become an even more inclusive, innovative and essential cultural anchor in Los Angeles County."

Robert "Bob" J. Abernethy, newly appointed chair of The Music Center's Board of Directors, has been a dedicated board member since 2003, playing a pivotal role in shaping The Music Center's evolution into one of Los Angeles County's most treasured cultural institutions. A passionate advocate for the arts as a public good, Abernethy believes that shared arts experiences strengthen communities' health, welfare and wellbeing. As founder and president of American Standard Development Company and Self Storage Management Company, he brings significant business acumen, civic vision and philanthropic dedication. His extensive service includes vice chair roles at both The Music Center and the Atlantic Council, as well as board or trustee appointments at RAND Center for Global Risk & Security,

New Leaders Council, Truman National Security Project, Integrity Initiatives International, Los Angeles World Affairs Council, Center for National Policy, The Brookings Institution, John Hopkins University, Davidson College, Loyola Marymount University, UCLA Arts and Health Systems and the Bloomberg School of Public Health, among others. Former commissioner of the California Transportation Commission, the Los Angeles Telecommunications Commission and the Los Angeles Planning & Zoning Commission, Abernethy was also a former director of the Los Angeles Metropolitan Transportation Authority and the Metropolitan Water District. He is a past member of the California State Board of Education and of the California Arts Council. Abernethy exemplifies a lifelong commitment to public service, viewing The Music Center not just as an arts organization but as a service organization—one that uplifts, unites and enriches lives across Los Angeles County—akin to his exemplary work with YMCA and free clinics located throughout Los Angeles. In his role as chair, Abernethy will lead with integrity, purpose and a firm belief that the arts belong to everyone. He received a bachelor of arts degree from Johns Hopkins University, an M.B.A. from Harvard Business School and postgraduate certificates in construction management and real estate from the University of California, Los Angeles.

Romesh Anketell is a program officer at The Ralph M. Parsons Foundation, where he blends his deep commitment to support nonprofits and his lifelong advocacy for community equity. A proud resident of Downtown L.A., he lives just steps from The Music Center—a place that inspired him as a child, provided solace to him during the pandemic and now fuels his work as a new board member. Beginning with his parents' involvement with the local arts scene in their native Sri Lanka, Anketell has been a longtime supporter of the performing arts. What Anketell admires about The Music Center's work is its goal to make the arts accessible to all Angelenos, by offering events and performances for free or at low-cost. With over 12 years in public health, including roles at the L.A. County and Pasadena Public Health Departments, and collaborations with the Centers for Disease Control and the State of California, Anketell champions initiatives that position the arts as a vital force for healing, belonging and joy. Anketell holds a bachelor's degree in environmental sciences from University of California, Berkeley, and a master's degree in public health from Loma Linda University. Most recently, he was selected to join the 2025 cohort of the prestigious Marshall Memorial Fellowship, a year-long program of the German Marshall Fund, in which individuals from the United States and Europe cultivate strong international bonds and invaluable transatlantic leadership connections. Anketell is a board member of two additional arts organizations: L.A. Dance Project and MUSE/IQUE.

Ronnie Kaplan, a Cleveland native and lifelong arts enthusiast, traces his love for music to childhood evenings filled with the sound of classical music spinning on the record player while his parents—devoted Cleveland Orchestra subscribers—unwound at home. That early spark grew into a deep passion during his adult years in Chicago, where he was a 15-year subscriber to the Joffrey Ballet and Goodman Theatre and a regular at Steppenwolf Theatre and Lookingglass Theatre Company productions. Now a managing director and portfolio manager at Oaktree Capital Management, Kaplan brings the same dedication to his role as an arts advocate in Los Angeles, where he admires The Music Center's commitment to accessible, inspiring programming for all Angelenos. A proud father of two teenage daughters—one a choir and a cappella singer, the other a budding fashion designer who designs and makes her own clothes—Kaplan is passionate about nurturing the next generation of arts lovers. He holds a bachelor's of science degree in economics from The Wharton School at the University of Pennsylvania (cum laude) and is a CFA charterholder. He resides in Studio City with his wife, Heather; their daughters Gabby and Lily; and their two beloved dogs, Zeke and Ollie.

Cary Lefton, CEO of Agora Realty and Management, finds immense joy in seeing Jerry Moss Plaza at The Music Center transformed into a vibrant hub of music, dance and community—especially knowing he helped bring that vision to life as a key member of the board committee behind the plaza's ambitious renovation. A dedicated board member since 2016 and now newly elected as vice chair, Lefton also leads the Operations and Facilities Committee, working closely to strengthen The Music Center's partnerships and extend its reach. Fueled by a belief that the arts can change lives, he was instrumental in bringing The Music Center directly into communities within the San Fernando Valley, such as Panorama City, Pacoima and Arleta, by hosting culturally rich, family-friendly events that make the arts more welcoming, accessible and diverse. Lefton takes pride in serving alongside a dynamic and passionate board, and he continues to champion The Music Center's mission to create inclusive and countywide arts experiences. He earned his bachelor's in political science from the University of Southern California and also serves on the board of Arts for L.A.

Darrell D. Miller, a partner at Fox Rothschild and one of The Music Center Board's newly appointed vice chairs, is proud of the evolution of the organization's board during his 11-year tenure, from a reactive body to a visionary, proactive team helping to shape a wide range of year-round programming across its iconic campus and Gloria Molina

Grand Park. As chair of the Nominating and Governance Committee, Miller has played a key role in cultivating a board that is energized, strategic and deeply committed to the arts. An esteemed entertainment attorney with over two decades of experience--and a former professional artist--Miller is passionate about expanding access to the arts. He is a dedicated champion of the *Spotlight Grand Finale*, The Music Center's signature annual celebration supporting young artists across Southern California. With degrees from Georgetown University Law Center and the University of Cincinnati Conservatory of Music, Miller blends legal acumen with artistic sensibility and encourages all Angelenos to return to The Music Center again and again to relive the magic of the live arts and experience the healing power of music, dance and theatre that strengthens the bonds of our community.

A lifelong arts lover whose creative journey began with art lessons at age five at The Art Institute of Chicago, **Thomas "Tom" Safran** returns to The Music Center Board after a decade-long hiatus, bringing with him a legacy of visionary leadership and civic impact as well as his belief that the arts are essential to the soul of Los Angeles. As chairman of Thomas Safran & Associates, a leading developer of affordable housing, Safran combines his commitment to community with a deep devotion to the arts. During his first tenure on The Music Center Board from 2006 to 2015, he played a key role in the capital campaign to renovate The Music Center's Mark Taper Forum. He is a Founders member of The Music Center and has served on the Fraternity of Friends/Music Center Leadership Council. Appointed in 2022 by President Joe Biden to the President's Advisory Committee on the Arts, Safran's influence spans from national housing advocacy to local community development. His Brentwood home--designed by Walt Disney Concert Hall architect Frank Gehry--mirrors his enduring connection to The Music Center's cultural legacy. Safran earned his M.B.A. from the University of California, Los Angeles and his bachelor's degree from Trinity College in Hartford, Connecticut.

A classically trained pianist turned financial leader, **Jason Subotky** brings a rare blend of artistic passion and strategic insight to The Music Center's Board of Directors, where he proudly represents the LA Phil, one of The Music Center's resident company campus partners. Appointed chair of the LA Phil Board of Directors in 2024, Subotky has been a dedicated member of its board since 2017 and serves on its management committee. His educational journey began with a bachelor's degree in piano performance from the University of Southern California, followed by an M.B.A. from Brigham Young University, charting a course that bridges the arts and finance with equal brilliance. Subotky's professional path includes leadership roles at a family office and Goldman Sachs before joining Yacktmann Asset Management in 2001, where he is now a partner and portfolio manager. He is married to renowned violinist Anne Akiko Meyers, both of whom are deeply committed to enriching L.A.'s cultural scene.

ABOUT THE MUSIC CENTER

As L.A.'s performing arts center, The Music Center convenes artists, communities and ideas with the goal of deepening the cultural lives of every resident in Los Angeles County. The \$80 million non-profit performing arts organization has two divisions: TMC Arts and TMC Ops. TMC Arts, The Music Center's programming engine, provides year-round programming inside The Music Center's four theatres, on Jerry Moss Plaza, outside at Gloria Molina Grand Park--a 12-acre adjacent green space--in schools and other locations all over Los Angeles County. TMC Arts presents world-class dance with *Glorya Kaufman Presents Dance at The Music Center*, free and low-cost public concerts and events, live and digital K-12 arts education programs, workshops, performances, interactive experiences and special events. TMC Ops manages the theatres, the Plaza and Gloria Molina Grand Park, which comprise \$3 billion in county assets, on behalf of the County of Los Angeles. The Music Center is also home to four renowned resident companies--Center Theatre Group, Los Angeles Master Chorale, LA Opera and LA Phil. For more information, visit musiccenter.org and follow The Music Center on social media @MusicCenterLA.

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