

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

## USDAN SUMMER CAMP FOR THE ARTS TAPS JONATHAN SHMIDT CHAPMAN AS FIRST-EVER ARTISTIC DIRECTOR

### Nonprofit Continues to Set Stage for 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Season

NEW YORK, NY (February 2018) – Usdan Summer Camp for the Arts ([www.usdan.org](http://www.usdan.org)), one of the pre-eminent nonprofit arts day camps in the country, today announced the addition of **Jonathan Schmidt Chapman** as the organization’s first-ever Artistic Director, curating the 2018 Festival Program at Camp. The Festival Program is a signature facet of the Usdan experience, which invites distinguished artists from a range of disciplines for private performances in the McKinley Amphitheater throughout the summer. Over the last 50 years, well-known and emerging artists have graced the stage on campus including singer Jane Monheit, the Tokyo String Quartet, Puppet Kitchen, musician Lisa Bielawa, Pilobolus, the Martha Graham Dance Company, and jazz legend Jimmy Heath as well as countless cast members from Broadway shows including *Shrek*, *Charlie and The Chocolate Factory*, *Wicked*, *Mamma Mia*, *Anything Goes*, and more.

Artist, producer, and curator **Jonathan Schmidt Chapman** previously served as the first Producer of Family Programming at Lincoln Center for the Performing Arts, launching a new programming initiative for young audiences, and creating ways to reimagine the Lincoln Center campus as an international arts destination for families. Currently, he is the Executive Director of Theatre for Young Audiences/USA (TYA/USA), a national nonprofit dedicated to providing professional development and resources to artists, theaters, and university programs focused on performing arts for youth. He is also the co-founder of New York’s acclaimed Trusty Sidekick Theater Company, leading the company through five years of growth and the creation of 12 original works, including the critically-acclaimed *Up and Away* (a multi-sensory, immersive experience for young people on the autism spectrum). Recent artistic credits include co-creator of *The Cerulean Time Capsule* for the Kennedy Center, and director of the world premiere of *The Boy at the Edge of Everything* (Finegan Kruckemeyer) at Seattle Children’s Theatre. Jonathan has held artistic and education-focused roles at The New Victory Theater, True Colors Youth Theatre, and the Cloud Foundation. He serves as an adjunct faculty member at New York University, where he teaches Theatre for Young Audiences.

“It’s exciting to think about the Festival and what it can be for the students,” says Jonathan—a Usdan alum himself— who credits seeing performances at Camp as inspiration for his career in the arts. “I can track back my realization that I could work in theater after watching the performances on stage and being exposed to a range of artists and performers.”

“When I was looking for someone to pick up the mantle of this newly-created role, I asked around the industry, and Jonathan was recommended by multiple people,” says Lauren Brandt Schloss, Executive Director of the nonprofit arts camp. “His background and personal connections to Usdan make him the perfect person to lead this important part of the Usdan offering, particularly for the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary year.”

**About Usdan Summer Camp for the Arts**

Celebrating its 50th anniversary in 2018, Usdan Summer Camp for the Arts ([usdan.org](http://usdan.org)) is the nation's preeminent not-for-profit day camp for the arts and has been named a "Best Of" camp by *TimeOutNY/Kids*, and by *NY Metro Parents*. Diverse and playfully rigorous from the start, for fifty years, we have brought world-class teachers and visiting artists – actors, directors, playwrights, painters, sculptors, musicians, composers, dancers, poets and novelists – to teach and collaborate with Usdan campers ages 4 to 18. Usdan ignites each child's artistic spirit in a fun, welcoming environment. We believe art making is brave making, friend making, freedom making and future making.

Usdan is an agency of the UJA-Federation of New York. All programs will take place at the camp's magnificent 140-acre woodland campus, located at 185 Colonial Springs Road in Wheatley Heights, NY 11798.

Press contact:

Meryl Cooper, The COOPERation Inc, [meryl@theCOOPERationinc.com](mailto:meryl@theCOOPERationinc.com), 917-974-0022

# # #