

The Power of WE

As I slowly readjust to life in the office after the holidays and a week in NYC, I've taken some time to reflect on my APAP 2019 experience, and in particular it's theme: The Power of WE. Here are a handful of the ways The Power of WE manifested itself throughout the conference (paraphrased, not direct quotes):

- **Emerging Leadership Institute:** Along with 26 other ELI participants and 3 international ISPA Fellows, we explored our own imperative to bring a leadership mindset to set a direction for, align, and motivate those with whom we work. We created new connections that will hopefully last long into our careers.
- **Jane Chu's Opening Remarks:** As artistic individuals, we have a unique musical and artistic "vocabulary" which we can translate into our personal communication style. You know not to perform Mozart as you would Debussy; use that to figure out how to tailor your approach depending on the message or the person receiving it. The arts lead to creativity, which can lead to new solutions in every sector or situation.
- **Leadership Fellows – Leading from the Middle:** Involve diverse voices in the conversation by rethinking "status updates" as "inquiries for discussion" whenever possible.
- **Leadership Fellows – Work/Life Integration:** Keep track of your own humanity and look for the humanity in others. Allow yourself and others the opportunity to laugh, and approach your life with a mantra of NOTHING WITHOUT JOY.
- **Building Audiences for Sustainability:** When engaging a new audience, the onus is on the organization to change its behavior to be welcoming and comfortable, not on those you're trying to engage. This echoed a sentiment from Jane Chu, that patrons want to feel welcome without having to give up part of their identity to fit yours.
- **Town Hall Plenary:** DIVERSITY is being invited to the party; INCLUSION is being invited to dance.

I also felt The Power of We through the presence of the MI Presenters Network. Ten members representing six organizations met for a business meeting and to share what we were most excited about for the remainder of the conference. I also had the wonderful opportunity to cross paths with members throughout the week on the Expo Hall floor, at meals and showcases, and in professional development sessions. I continue to find great value in the relationships I've formed through MI Presenters, and I hope others do, as well. In the bustle of the conference, a familiar face can be a welcome respite!

A special thanks to the Michigan Council for Arts and Cultural Affairs (MCACA), whose support through the Professional and Organizational Development Mini-Grant covered a significant portion of my expenses to attend the conference. I highly recommend this grant opportunity for anyone who is eligible.