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**For Immediate Release**

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### **EMF Welcomes Three New Faculty Artists**

Eastern Music Festival is honored to announce the addition of three acclaimed musicians to its 2017 lineup of faculty artists. Nigel Armstrong, Avi Nagin and Jake Fridkis have signed contracts to teach and perform during the Festival's upcoming 56<sup>th</sup> season.

"We're fortunate to add these three talented artists and dedicated educators to our roster. They'll join over 75 colleagues in performances and as mentors to our 225 young artists between June 25 and July 29 at EMF's 56<sup>th</sup> Festival," says EMF Executive Director Chris Williams.

**Nigel Armstrong** is EMF's new Associate Concertmaster. He is concertmaster of the Santa Cruz Symphony, a prize winner in the Menuhin and Tchaikovsky competitions and a graduate of the Curtis Institute.

**Avi Nagin** is Symphony in C's principal 2<sup>nd</sup> violinist, a graduate of The Colburn School and the Yale School of Music and a New York Youth Symphony chamber music faculty member.

**Jake Fridkis** is principal flautist with the Fort Worth Symphony and an EMF alumnus. He received his master's degree and artist diploma from Yale University and will fill the Eastern Festival Orchestra's second flute chair.

Armstrong fills the seat formerly occupied by Qing Li of the Baltimore Symphony, and Nagin replaces Yuka Kadota of the Milwaukee Symphony. Both Li and Kadota are pursuing other artistic endeavors after successful tenures with EMF. Fridkis' predecessor, Brian Gordon of the Phoenix Symphony, is retiring from EMF after three influential decades on faculty.

During its annual five-week season, EMF's team of nearly 80 faculty artists teach over 225 student artists and perform dozens of enriching concerts in Greensboro and throughout the Triad. Acclaimed as one of "North Carolina's Musical Treasures," Eastern Music Festival's concerts are anchor points on the Triad's summer arts and entertainment calendar.

## Full Biographies

### **Nigel Armstrong**

Violinist Nigel Armstrong is emerging as a dynamic and creative artist both within and beyond the realm of classical music. From his musical beginnings as a member of the Little Fiddlers in Sonoma, CA, to collaborations with tango musicians in Argentina, he's enjoyed using the violin in a versatile manner throughout his life. As soloist he's performed with orchestras such as the Dusseldorf Symphony, the Los Angeles Chamber Orchestra, the St. Petersburg Philharmonic, Youth Orchestra of the Americas and the Boston Pops, and with conductors including Sir Neville Marriner and Carlos Miguel Prieto. As a chamber musician, his concerts have taken him across the U.S. and abroad – highlights have included opportunities to share the stage with the Tokyo String Quartet and pianist Jonathan Biss.

A graduate of the Colburn School and the Curtis Institute of Music, Armstrong's teachers have included Arnold Steinhardt, Robert Lipsett, Zaven Melikian and Donald Weilerstein, among others. He also feels fortunate to have lived with and learned from the Plum Village community in France founded by Buddhist monk Thich Nhat Hanh, where he recently spent a year working on their organic farm and taking part in their daily life.

### **Avi Nagin**

Violinist Avi Nagin is a recitalist, chamber musician and orchestral player based in New York City. Nagin has collaborated in performances with members of Ebène and Orion Quartets, Paul Coletti, Benny and Eric Kim and Ronald Leonard. He has appeared at prestigious master classes and workshops around the world, including at Carnegie Hall, where he worked closely with Leon Fleisher, Yo-Yo Ma and Pamela Frank. Recently, he was selected to perform in the class of legendary violinist Ivry Gitlis at the International Musicians Seminar at Prussia Cove in Cornwall, England.

Nagin is principal 2<sup>nd</sup> violin of Symphony in C, assistant principal 2<sup>nd</sup> violin of the Norwalk Symphony, section violin with the New Haven Symphony Orchestra and Artosphere Festival Orchestra and has appeared with the Virginia Symphony Orchestra and Greenwich Symphony Orchestra. He has held leadership positions in the orchestras of the Tanglewood Music Center and Aspen Music Festival.

A graduate of The Colburn School and Yale School of Music, Nagin's principal teachers include Ani Kavafian, Robert Lipsett and Daniel Phillips, and he studied chamber music with Arnold Steinhardt. An active educator, Nagin serves on the chamber music faculty of the New York Youth Symphony and was a Teaching Artist with Yale University's Music in Schools Initiative.

### **Jake Fridkis**

Flautist Jake Fridkis is hailed by the *Dallas Morning News* for his "radiant tone and generous expressivity" and the *Fort Worth Star Telegram* for his "musicianship, clear sound, precise intonation and empathic dynamic levels," and has quickly established himself as one of the leading flautists of his generation.

Before graduating from the Yale School of Music, he won the principal flute position in the South Dakota Symphony where he played for two months before winning the same position with the Fort Worth Symphony where he is currently principal. He has performed as a concerto soloist in Germany, Italy, France, Brazil and throughout the U.S. As a guest flautist, he has performed with the St. Louis Symphony, Korea's Symphony SONG, the New Haven Symphony and the Princeton Symphony.

Fridkis earned his master's and artist diploma degrees while studying with Ransom Wilson at the Yale School of Music, receiving the coveted Thomas Nyfenger Memorial Prize for highest achievements. His other studies have been at the Cleveland Institute with Josh Smith and at Aspen with Mark Sparks. Fridkis made his National Flute Association convention debut at age 15 premiering Gary Schocker's flute duet "French Toast" with his brother and flute duo partner Gabe and with Gary Schocker on the piano. He is published in *Flute Talk*, spreading positive messages about classical music.

### **About Eastern Music Festival**

Eastern Music Festival, which was begun in 1961 in Greensboro, stands among the nation's premier summer music educational programs and most imaginative performance festivals. For the 2016 season, EMF presented over 65 performances in venues throughout the Triad such as Temple Emanuel, Greensboro's First Presbyterian Church, Greensboro's public libraries as well as concerts at Guilford College, UNC Greensboro, High Point University and Appalachian State University. EMF attracts artists, students and audiences from around the globe to Greensboro each summer during its five-week festival.

Eastern Music Festival returns June 24- July 29, 2017, for its 56<sup>th</sup> season.

For more information about Eastern Music Festival,  
visit <http://www.easternmusicfestival.org/festival/calendar>

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