

Lithuanian born Canadian violinist extraordinaire Atis Bankas has performed as a soloist in Canada, Europe, the United States, Korea, Japan, the former Soviet Union, and with orchestras under the direction of Neeme Jarvi, Iona Brown, Andrew Davis, and JoAnn Falletta among many others. Chamber music collaborators include pianists A. Laplante, S. Goodyear, R. Silverman, R. McDonald, N. Kogan, among many others. Atis Bankas is dedicatee of numerous new works by composers such as G. Kulesha, H. Freedman, D. Varelas, M. Bronner, V. Bartulis, A. Navakas, G. Samsonas, D. Hyman, S. Burbi, A. Shenderovas, P. Tiefenbach, and many others.

On international scene 2017-18 season highlights include solo and chamber music performances in Czech Republic, Germany, Italy and Lithuania. Atis Bankas is the first violinist of the Gould String Quartet, member of Potsdam Trio, leader of Ensemble CamerAtis. and Leader and Artistic Director of the Canadian Chamber Academy Orchestra.

Mr. Bankas is the Founder and Artistic Director of Music Niagara Festival, a highly regarded annual international summer music festival in Niagara-on-the-Lake, Ontario marking it's 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary this 2018 season.

Bankas' solo and chamber music performances have been featured on CJRT, CFMX, CBC and NPR radio networks. He has recorded on Fidelis, Analekta, Radioservis and CBC labels. His performances have received high critical acclaim: "Atis Bankas's phenomenal technique allowed him to portray the original flavour of the traditional classical repertoire... he was able to present the beauty of the classical genre employing musical mastery and warmth of his sound..." KOREAN ART & CULTURE MONTHLY MAGAZINE

"We have one of the greatest living violinists with us every summer here in Niagara-on-the-Lake — Atis Bankas. He has it all, intonation, beautiful tone in all registers, phrasing, and great musicianship. Having such an exceptional talent here is something we should celebrate." PETER HALL, WNED RADIO, BUFFALO, NY "A brilliant technique and profound musicianship are combined in the artistry of the Lithuanian born violinist, Atis Bankas" ESTONIAN DAILY

"The mellow tone he elicits from his instrument is responsible for the warmth of the ensemble. Its pitch approaches that of the viola but in capable hands of Mr. Bankas it soars the heights into sweetness. Quite remarkable!" NATIONAL POST "...a driven melting sound of the violin in Sergei Prokofiev's sonata for violin and piano Nr. 2 in D major..." POTSDAMER NEUESTE NACHRICHTEN, GERMANY

Atis Bankas first came to national and international attention after winning the International Violin Competition in Tallinn, Estonia. After graduating from the Lithuanian State Conservatory with a summa cum laude Masters degree in solo violin performance, chamber music, pedagogy, and orchestral performance, Mr. Bankas continued his post-graduate work in violin performance at the Moscow Tchaikovsky Conservatory. where he studied in David Oistrakh's violin department. His principal teachers were Victor Radovich (in Vilnius, Lithuania) and Semyon Snitkovsky (in Moscow, Russia), both students of David Oistrakh.

Being a member of the Toronto Symphony Orchestra, Mr. Bankas also shares his musical talents by teaching a large violin studio at the Glenn Gould School at the Royal Conservatory of Music in Toronto. For his extraordinary dedication and achievement in the field of teaching music Atis Bankas was awarded the Barenreiter Prize, Carnegie Hall's American Protege and Enkor competition awards. Mr. Bankas has adjudicated competitions and conducted master classes in Japan, Korea, Europe, the United States and Canada. Many of Mr. Bankas' students have been prizewinners of international and national competitions, such as the Paganini International Violin Competition, Stradivarius International Violin Competition, J. Heifetz International Violin Competition, Kocian Violin Competition, Stulberg International Competition, the Toronto Symphony and Montreal Symphony competitions.

In recognition of his musical contributions he was inducted into the International Knightly Order of St. George and was honoured as an Honorary Doctor of Arts by the Azerbaijan Ministry of Education and the Academy of Fine Arts and most recently Mr. Bankas received the prestigious 2017 Spirit of Niagara Christopher Newton Award for Extraordinary Vision in Business.