**Atis Bankas**

**Violin**

**Lithuanian-born Canadian violinist 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 Järvi, Iona Brown, Sir Andrew Davis, and JoAnn Falletta, amongst many others.**

His chamber music collaborators include pianists André Laplante, Stewart Goodyear, Robert Silverman, and others. He is also the dedicatee of numerous new works by composers such as Gary Kulesha, Harry Freedman, Dmitry Varelas, Mikhail Bronner, and Peter Tiefenbach.

A long-time member of the Toronto Symphony Orchestra, Atis Bankas is first violinist of the Gould String Quartet, member of the Potsdam Trio, leader of Ensemble CamerAtis. and Leader and Artistic Director of the Canadian Chamber Academy Orchestra. He is also the Founder and Artistic Director of Music Niagara. Bankas’s critically acclaimed solo and chamber music performances have been featured on CJRT, CFMX, CBC, and NPR radio networks, and he has recorded for the Fidelis, Analekta, Radioservis, and CBC labels.

Atis Bankas first came to international attention after winning the International Violin Competition in Tallinn, Estonia. After graduating from the Lithuanian State Conservatory with a *summa cum laude* master’s 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.

Mr. Bankas shares his musical talents by teaching a large violin studio at The Glenn Gould School at The Royal Conservatory in Toronto. For his extraordinary dedication and achievement in the field of teaching music, Atis Bankas was awarded the Bärenreiter Prize, and Carnegie Hall's American Protégé and Enkor competition awards. He has adjudicated competitions and conducted masterclasses in Japan, Korea, Europe, the United States, and Canada. Many of Mr. Bankas’s students have been prizewinners of international and national competitions.

In recognition of his musical contributions, Atis Bankas 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. Most recently, he received the prestigious 2017 Spirit of Niagara Christopher Newton Award for Extraordinary Vision in Business.