

FIVE BOROUGHES MUSIC FESTIVAL ANNOUNCES APPOINTMENT OF NEW ARTISTIC DIRECTOR, MICHAEL UNTERMAN



Meet Michael Unterman: <https://youtu.be/O8cea124uUY>

NEW YORK, NY (September 4, 2019) – Five Boroughs Music Festival (5BMF) is pleased to announce the appointment of **Michael Unterman** as its new Artistic Director, effective September 1, 2019. An accomplished cellist and chamber musician, Unterman steps into the role following the tenure of 5BMF's Founding Artistic Director, **Jesse Blumberg**. He joins the 5BMF leadership team alongside Executive Director **Donna Breitzer**, Board President **Emily Kennerley**, and 5BMF's dedicated Board of Directors and staff.

Members of the press are invited to meet Michael Unterman at 5BMF's Season Opening Reception on **Monday, September 23 at 6:30 p.m.** at **Judson Memorial Church** in Manhattan, prior to the **7:30 p.m.** season opening concert featuring daring songwriting collective, **FOUNDERS**. If you'd like to attend the season opening reception and concert, please RSVP to will@morahanartsandmedia.com.

Of Unterman's appointment **Jesse Blumberg** says, "From the very earliest days of Five Boroughs Music Festival, I knew that I wanted the organization to grow, thrive, and survive, long past my own tenure as Artistic Director. When I began to think more seriously about stepping away from this role, I hoped that we would be able to find someone just like Michael to shepherd 5BMF into its next chapter. I am incredibly grateful to our Board and Search Committee for their tireless work in identifying such a talented, thoughtful, visionary, and inspiring new leader to move 5BMF forward, and to Michael for assuming the position with intellect and enthusiasm. It is already evident that he and my great friend and co-founder Donna Breitzer will make a wonderful team, and I look forward to transitioning into my new roles as advisor, volunteer, and 5BMF's biggest fan."

Michael Unterman effuses, "Coming in, my overwhelming feeling is one of immense gratitude, for Jesse and Donna, for 5BMF's Board, and all the musicians, audience members, supporters, and others who've helped build this very special series. I'm very much a believer in 5BMF's forward-looking approach to programming, which is a legacy I'm thrilled to have a hand in carrying forward. Already, the lead up to this point has brought about so many good conversations—with members of the organization, friends, and colleagues—and spurred me to re-explore New York City with fresh eyes. It has reminded me that it is a privilege to be amidst a diversity of cultures as can be found no place else. To have the opportunity to present great music and musicians, to bring that to all corners of New York City, and to spur New Yorkers from all boroughs to follow along, is as joyous a charge and a challenge as I can imagine."

Emily Kennerley, President of the Board, agrees, "We are thrilled to welcome Michael Unterman as our new Artistic Director. From a competitive pool of international applicants, Michael stood out as perfectly qualified to take on this role; his programming and performing experience, his lifetime of work as a cellist, his energy and his leadership expertise will help us write a bold new chapter for 5BMF. We are so grateful for Jesse Blumberg's inspired leadership over the years, and we look forward to growing our relationship with Michael. The future of 5BMF is strong and we know that this new phase of creativity will continue to bring exciting concerts to people throughout the vibrant five boroughs of NYC."

About Michael Unterman

Cellist **Michael Unterman** is Five Boroughs Music Festival's second Artistic Director, joining the organization in September 2019. He cut his teeth in programming and concert production with the Boston-based string chamber orchestra A Far Cry, a group whose members act as co-artistic directors. As a curator and production lead, his projects have been praised as "just the kind of imaginative artistic agenda that more groups should be prodded to try" (*The Boston Globe*) and "gorgeous and remarkably unified" (*The Washington Post*). He has also been a frequent ambassador for the group, speaking to audiences and writing about the group's programming on its website blog and in fundraising efforts.

Unterman enjoys an active performing career on both modern and baroque cellos; he has been a core member of A Far Cry since 2010 and serves as principal cellist of Boston Baroque, earning Grammy nominations with both groups in 2019. This season, he will also appear as guest principal cellist with the Boston Lyric Opera and Portland Baroque Orchestra. He also makes frequent appearances at the Birdfoot Chamber Music Festival in New Orleans and the Staunton Music Festival in Virginia.

Michael Unterman is a native of Vancouver, Canada and thus is proudly fluent in both French and ice hockey. He has earned degrees from the New England Conservatory and The Juilliard School, studying with Laurence Lesser, Natasha Brofsky, and Phoebe Carrai, and was a Fulbright Scholar to Barcelona in 2008, studying with Lluís Claret and the Quartetto Casals. Michael is also grateful to his early mentors, who helped lay strong musical foundations and instilled an ethic of supporting one's fellow musicians, which inspires his behind-the-scenes administrative work to this day. These mentors include his early cello teacher Judy Fraser, quartet coach Heilwig von Koenigslow, his mother and pianist-collaborator Kathy Bjorseth, and Tom and Isobel Rolston, former directors of the Banff Centre where Michael spent many a formative week. Further information can be found at www.michaelunterman.com.

About Five Boroughs Music Festival

Since 2007, Five Boroughs Music Festival has brought world-class chamber music programs to every corner of New York City. Described as "imaginative" by *The New York Times*, "enterprising" by *The New Yorker*, and "vital" by WQXR's *Operavore* blog, 5BMF's commitment to musical outreach and engaging programming has distinguished the organization as a standout presence in the NYC arts community from its earliest days.

Now entering its 13th season, 5BMF has to date presented more than 80 concerts of over 60 unique programs in nearly 50 different venues across the city. 5BMF's roster of world-class artists comprises over 250 individual performers and ensembles representing an incredibly diverse range of musical genres and styles. As

champions of new music, 5BMF has commissioned 50 composers and presented world premieres of their works in more than 12 concert presentations. 5BMF's venues are just as eclectic, and have included historic NYC landmarks such as Federal Hall, Pregones Theater, Flushing Town Hall, King Manor Museum, Brooklyn Historical Society and the Snug Harbor Cultural Center, among many others.

Five Boroughs Music Festival's mission is to enrich communities and cultivate new audiences by bringing world-class, affordable chamber music to all corners of New York City. 5BMF collaborates with local cultural institutions to present up-and-coming artists alongside the genre's most distinguished performers, and challenges the standard definition of 'chamber music' by presenting a broad range of musical styles, from early music to contemporary works, world music and other non-classical forms.

5BMF's programming is rooted in familiar classical music traditions, but is inclusive of a broad range of styles; art song recitals, early music, new music and other non-classical forms are all represented. By employing a broad definition of chamber music and sustaining a commitment to artistic outreach by bringing world class programs to neighborhoods all over the city, 5BMF offers an affordable, intimate concert experience to a wide variety of New York City audiences. Please visit www.5bmf.org or email info@5bmf.org for more information.

###