



# FROM THE TOP

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## **From the Top Announces Peter Dugan as Permanent Host of the Venerable NPR Program**

### **Vijay Gupta, Alex Laing, Tessa Lark, Orli Shaham and Charles Yang Comprise From the Top's Newly Formed Team of Co-hosts & Creatives**

Boston, Massachusetts (January 23, 2020) – **From the Top**, America's largest platform celebrating the voices and talents of America's brightest young classical musicians, has named pianist **Peter Dugan** as permanent host for its nationally-distributed NPR radio program, beginning with the 2020-2021 season.

Peter has a long history with From the Top (FTT), being an FTT alumnus, first appearing as a musician on the program in 2007 at the age of 18, and serving as guest host since the 2018-2019 season.

Peter will be joined by From the Top's newly formed team of distinguished co-hosts & creatives – violinist **Vijay Gupta**, violinist **Tessa Lark**, clarinetist **Alex Laing**, pianist **Orli Shaham**, and violinist **Charles Yang** – each of whom has an innovative perspective on music-making, entrepreneurship, and the role of the artist in society. Vijay Gupta, Tessa Lark, Alex Laing and Charles Yang will be featured on-air as co-hosts with Peter Dugan, and Orli Shaham will solo guest host. All will interview and collaborate with the From the Top young musicians. All will also serve as mentors to the From the Top musicians, and will be actively involved in leadership training, community engagement, and career development programs. As strategic and collaborative partners, their insight and experience will help to inform future development of From the Top.

"Being a guest host on From the Top these past two seasons has been incredibly rewarding. The young musicians inspire me, not just with their dazzling virtuosity, but more importantly, with their sincere artistry and humanity, and their unbridled passion for their craft," said Dugan. "It meant so much to me to join the From the Top family when I first performed on the show as a

teenager. I'm truly honored and humbled now to step into the role of permanent host and, with the help of our brilliant co-hosts and creatives, to continue From the Top's tradition of empowering the next generation of great musicians by sharing their music and their stories with listeners across the country."

"Peter's consummate musical skill, genuine curiosity, and natural rapport with From the Top's young musicians make him a perfect fit to host From the Top," said Gretchen Nielsen, From the Top's Executive Director. "Along with Peter and our remarkable team of co-hosts & creatives, we look forward to ushering in this new chapter in From the Top's history as we continue to showcase the stories and talents of today's extraordinary young musicians."

For the past 20 years, From the Top has featured performances and stories of young classically-trained musicians, and continues to provide a national platform that showcases and supports the next generation of emerging classical artists, from live concert tapings to leadership training and community engagement programs.

Peter Dugan's inaugural 2020-2021 season as permanent host will be announced at a later date.

Peter's upcoming events and broadcast dates include:

**NPR's From the Top, hosted by Peter Dugan** | Thursday, February, 6, 2020 at 7:00 PM | Calderwood Hall at the Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum, Boston, Massachusetts | Presented by Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum in partnership with From the Top | [Tickets and information](#) | Airs week of March 2, 2020

**NPR's From the Top, hosted by Paquito D'Rivera and Peter Dugan** | Saturday, February 8, 2020 at 2:00 PM | New England Conservatory's Jordan Hall, Boston, Massachusetts | [Tickets and information](#) | Airs week of March 30, 2020

**NPR's From the Top, hosted by Vijay Gupta and Peter Dugan** | Wednesday, March 4, 2020 at 7:30 PM | The Wallis Annenberg Center for Performing Arts, Los Angeles, California | Presented by The Wallis | [Tickets and information](#) | Airs week of June 1, 2020

**NPR's From the Top, hosted by Alex Laing and Peter Dugan** | March 19, 2020 at 7:30 PM | Presented by Interlochen Center for the Arts | Corson Auditorium at Interlochen Center for the Arts, Interlochen, Michigan | [Tickets and information](#) | Airs week of June 22, 2020

**NPR's From the Top, hosted by Reena Esmail and Peter Dugan** | May 10 - 15, 2020 | Colburn School Residency | Colburn School, Los Angeles, California | Airs weeks of September 7 and 28, 2020

Please visit [click here](#) to listen to previous From the Top broadcasts featuring Peter Dugan and other guest hosts.

Pianist **Peter Dugan** served as guest host on nine From the Top episodes since the 2018-19 season, and first appeared as a musician on the program in 2007 at the age of 18. Over the last 11 years, he appeared as a soloist, recitalist, and chamber musician across North America and

abroad. Equally at home in classical, jazz, and pop idioms, Peter has performed in duos and trios with artists ranging from Itzhak Perlman and Joshua Bell to Jesse Colin Young and Glenn Close. His debut with Michael Tilson Thomas and the San Francisco Symphony in 2017 was described by the *Los Angeles Times* as “stunning.” He is a founding creator and the pianist for Operation Superpower, a superhero opera program for children.

An esteemed violinist, speaker and educator, **Vijay Gupta** is a leading advocate for the power of music to foster social connection. A 2018 John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Fellow, Gupta is the founder and Artistic Director of Street Symphony, a non-profit organization providing musical engagement, dialogue and teaching artistry for homeless and incarcerated communities in Los Angeles. Vijay Gupta joined the Los Angeles Philharmonic at age 19, and served as a member of the first violin section through 2018. He has appeared as a guest concertmaster with the Los Angeles Opera and the Philharmonia Orchestra of London, and is an active recitalist, soloist and chamber musician. Gupta teaches, performs and speaks nationally on the intersection of music and education, mental health, and social issues, and serves on the faculty of The Colburn School. Vijay Gupta plays a 2010 violin made by Los Angeles luthier Eric Benning.

**Alex Laing** is principal clarinet for The Phoenix Symphony, a post he has held since 2002. Active in his community as a performing and teaching artist, he is committed to exploring the push and pull between a legacy art form and its unfixed future. A long time believer in community engaged music making, he recently started The Leading Tone, a non-profit after school program. The project brings music to young people and explores teaching artistry and creative youth development. Alex recently received the 2018 Sphinx Medal of Excellence and was named one of Musical America's Professionals of the Year for 2017. Reflecting his belief that “music isn’t just sound; it’s sounds, words and people” he is frequently sought as a collaborator and has performed with the Sphinx Virtuosi at Carnegie Hall; with Lawrence Brownlee (in the world premiere of Tyshawn Sorey’s *Cycle of My Being*); with Thomas Hampson (as part of his *Song of America: Beyond Liberty* project); with the Recollective Orchestra (in the 2018 soundtrack recording of Disney’s *The Lion King*) and with the Gateways Festival Orchestra. As a teacher he has been a frequent collaborator with the Los Angeles Philharmonic’s YOLA (Youth Orchestra Los Angeles) program, and a faculty member for both the National Youth Orchestra and the League of American Orchestra's Essentials of Orchestra Management Seminar. He currently serves as lead faculty for the 2019-2020 YOLA National Institute and is on the board of directors for Gateways Music Festival and Arizona School for the Arts.

Violinist **Tessa Lark**, a From the Top alumna who recently hosted the program in October 2019, is a recipient of a 2018 Borletti-Buitoni Trust Fellowship and a 2016 Avery Fisher Career Grant, Silver Medalist in the 2014 International Violin Competition of Indianapolis, and winner of the 2012 Naumburg International Violin Competition. She is one of the most captivating artistic voices of our time. A budding superstar in the classical realm, she is also a highly acclaimed fiddler in the tradition of her native Kentucky. Since making her concerto debut with the Cincinnati Symphony Orchestra at sixteen, Ms. Lark has appeared with dozens of orchestras, festivals, and recital venues which include Carnegie Hall, Ravinia, San Francisco Performances, Marlboro Music, Lincoln Center’s Great Performers Series, the Concertgebouw in Amsterdam, and Australia’s Musica Viva Festival. Recent and upcoming highlights include debuts with the Seattle and Indianapolis symphonies and the Buffalo and Rochester philharmonics. In January

2019, she made her debut with the Albany Symphony Orchestra in the world premiere of *SKY*, a bluegrass-inspired violin concerto written for her by Michael Torke, and since then she has performed the work with numerous other orchestras. Ms. Lark is a graduate of New England Conservatory with an Artist Diploma from The Juilliard School. She plays a ca.1600 G.P. Maggini violin on loan from an anonymous donor through the Stradivari Society of Chicago.

The concert pianist **Orli Shaham** served as guest host on *From the Top* last season and has an impressive international reputation as one of today's most gifted pianists. *The New York Times* called her a "brilliant pianist", and she is admired worldwide for her interpretations of both standard and modern repertoire. In addition to performing concertos and recitals around the world, she created and hosts a live interactive concert series for young children. *Orli Shaham's Bach Yard* (formerly *Baby Got Bach*) was founded in 2010, and is recognized by parents, media and the music community as a significant force in music education and entertainment.

**Charles Yang** is described by the *Boston Globe* as one who "plays classical violin with the charisma of a rock star" and the recipient of the 2018 Leonard Bernstein Award. He first appeared on *From the Top* as a 14-year-old and has been featured on "From the Top at Carnegie Hall" on PBS, and numerous other *From the Top* projects since. Not only confined to classical violin, Mr. Yang's improvisational crossover abilities as a violinist, electric violinist, and vocalist have led him to performances around the world such as his recent solo debuts at the Berlin Konzerthaus with Wayne Marshall and the Schleswig Holstein Festival Orchestra and at The Ravinia Festival with Marin Alsop and the Chicago Symphony Orchestra. In 2016, he became the newest member of the genre-defying trio, Time for Three.

### **About From the Top**

From the Top is an independent non-profit organization that supports, develops, and shares the artistic voices and stories of young classically-trained musicians. Through its primary platform, a weekly one-hour NPR radio broadcast, and nationally-recognized arts leadership programs, From the Top amplifies the hope, passion, and discipline of today's extraordinary young musicians.

From the Top provides young musicians with live performance opportunities in premier concert venues across the country, national exposure to nearly half a million listeners on its weekly NPR show, leadership and community engagement preparation, and more than \$3 million in scholarships since 2005.

From the Top's programs are made possible in part by an award from the National Endowment of the Arts, a grant from the Jack Kent Cooke Foundation, generous contributions from individuals and institutions, and partnerships with radio stations nationwide.

Learn more at [www.fromthetop.org](http://www.fromthetop.org).

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