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Press Release

For Immediate Release

Legendary Bassist Nathan East and Yamaha Entertainment Group Founder & Vice President Chris Gero to be Presented Top Awards at the 2016 Albuquerque Film & Music Experience

Albuquerque, NM – March 7, 2016 - Albuquerque is in for another sizzling lineup that kicks off in April with the fourth annual Albuquerque Film & Music Experience (AFME), where this year's honorees top of the charts in the music world.

"We are extremely excited to welcome Nathan East and Chris Gero to the Albuquerque community as AFME programming continues to grow," said Ivan Wiener, Executive Director of AFME. "AFME has gained traction as one of the leading worldwide film festivals with the creative focus of bringing filmmakers, musicians and artists of all genres together to share their art forms and co-create into the future."

Nathan East, one of the top bassists in the world, will receive the 2016 AFME Music Award on Saturday, April 23 during a tribute concert showcasing songs he has recorded throughout his career. The concert will include performances by local vocalists and musicians, the East family and other special guests in attendance.

With over 2,000 recordings, East is considered one of the most recorded bass players in the history of music. East is a founding member of the contemporary jazz quartet Fourplay, along with Bob James, Lee Ritenour and Harvey Mason. "You may not know his face, but you certainly know his music," said Jose Antonio Ponce, music coordinator for AFME.

East has recorded, performed and co-written songs with Barry White, Anita Baker, The Love Unlimited Orchestra, Babyface, B.B. King, Eric Clapton, George Harrison, Elton John, Laura Pausini, Michael Jackson, Stevie Wonder, Bryan Ferry, Savage Garden, Barbara Streisand, Sting, Quincy Jones, Al Jarreau, Kenny Loggins, The Manhattan Transfer, Herbie Hancock, Daft Punk and more. In 2013, he recorded the bass line of Daft Punk's chart-topping hit "Get Lucky," which went on to win the Grammy Award for Record of the Year and Best Pop Duo/Group Performance (2014) and sell over 7.5 million copies. East also composed the music for the number one hit song "Easy Lover" for Phil Collins and Philip Bailey.

In 2014, East released his first ever self-titled debut solo album on Yamaha Entertainment Group. The album features guest appearances by Michael McDonald, Sara Bareilles, Stevie Wonder, Eric Clapton, Kazumasa Oda, Bob James, Chuck Loeb, Ray Parker, Jr., David Paich and his 13-year-old son Noah East. *Nathan East* topped the jazz charts and received a Grammy nomination for Best Contemporary Instrumental Album. Most recently, East was in the studio to record an album with longtime friend and fellow Fourplay member, Bob James. The legendary bassist and keyboardist released *The New Cool* in 2015. The Grammy nominated album is an acoustic jazz offering centered around duets by the celebrated jazz artists.

AFME is also excited to present the 2016 Visionary Award to Chris Gero, an Emmy award winning film director and composer, two-time Grammy nominated record producer and the Founder and Vice President of Yamaha Entertainment Group. Widely regarded as a world-class image-maker, Gero has signed more than 3,600 artists, including Elton John, Alicia Keys, Paul McCartney, Norah Jones, Josh Groban, Sarah

McLachlan, Sheryl Crow, John Legend and Ben Folds, among others. Gero oversees the development and branding of this star-studded global roster through numerous artist related initiatives around the world. Gero founded Yamaha Entertainment Group as a boutique, one-stop shop record label designed to give artists a voice with the backing of the largest music manufacturer in the world.

In addition to his Emmy award for “The Gift,” Gero has produced countless films that have gone on to become critically acclaimed, including “The Million Dollar Piano,” which Gero produced for Elton John’s Las Vegas based show and “Nathan East For the Record,” a documentary that chronicles the process of recording East’s number one solo album, 30 years in the making. The film features appearances by a variety of artists East has worked with throughout his career, including Eric Clapton, Quincy Jones, Phil Collins, Lionel Richie, Michael McDonald, Kenny Loggins, Vince Gill, David Foster and Don Was.

Not only does Gero produce exceptional films and records, but he is also known for superior quality concert productions, such as “A Tribute to Elton John,” “Michael McDonald: A Gathering of Friends,” the UNITE to Face Addiction Concert, and countless NAMM shows with top Yamaha artists.

“Chris’s vision has given Yamaha artists an amazing voice to create and debut their music,” said Wiener. “By combining a unique boutique record label, film production house and marketing engine for artists, Yamaha Entertainment Group has become the innovative leader in the music industry for showcasing their talent, instruments and global projects.”

“I am so grateful to receive such a prestigious award from AFME alongside my dear friend Nathan East,” commented Gero. “It is a true honor to work with such talented, innovative artists. They are the ones that inspire me to work without boundaries and constantly push me to be my most creative self.”

The AFME Foundation, a non-profit 501 (c) (3) organization, supports the nurturing, success and growth of a vibrant creative community, specifically through film, music and the arts, and seeks to help further a world-class economic center of excellence for these industries in Albuquerque, New Mexico. It produces the Albuquerque Film & Music Experience (AFME), an annual film and music festival, attracts prominent attendees, filmmakers, musicians and visionaries from around the globe to celebrate the art of storytelling and collaborate into the future. The Foundation also supports the Albuquerque film, music and art scenes through creation, facilitation and support of complimentary, mission-based projects and programs. Our purpose is to provide opportunities for future generations, while increasing exposure and economic impact for the City of Albuquerque, the State of New Mexico and our partners.

ABOUT YAMAHA ENTERTAINMENT GROUP:

[Yamaha Entertainment Group of America](#) is a boutique, one-stop shop, record label developed to be the champion of the musician with the backing power of the largest music manufacturer in the world. Yamaha Entertainment Group is branding, promotion, concert production, content development, product placement, tour support, piano logistics and artist relations, all rolled into one. Home to more than 3,600 talented artists, Yamaha Entertainment Group is responsible for the development and advancement of the Yamaha brand name through numerous artist related activities worldwide.

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