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To whom it may concern

Testimonial letter - Aavik Duo

As Head of the Arts Department at the Estonian Ministry of Culture, I am writing in strong support of the P-1 visa application of violinist Hans Christian Aavik and pianist Karolina Aavik, together known as the Aavik Duo. They represent one of the most distinguished chamber ensembles of the younger generation in Estonia, with a profile that extends well beyond our national borders.

The Aavik Duo has performed in major concert halls and festivals across Europe, including their recent appearance at the George Enescu Festival in Romania in autumn 2025, where they presented the complete cycle of Enescu's violin sonatas. In addition to their duo activity, violinist Hans Christian Aavik made his debut at Carnegie Hall as a soloist with the Estonian Festival Orchestra, marking a significant milestone in his international career. The Duo has also taken part in the Jyväskylä International Chamber Music Competition, further demonstrating their standing within the European chamber music scene.

Their artistry has been recognized by Deutsche Grammophon, which released three of their singles — a rare and exceptional distinction for Estonian musicians. Founded in Germany in 1898, Deutsche Grammophon is the world's oldest surviving classical music record label and is widely regarded as one of the most prestigious institutions in the field of classical recording. To date, no other Estonian classical instrumentalists have collaborated with Deutsche Grammophon, underscoring the extraordinary level of international recognition achieved by the Aavik Duo.

Together, the Duo has cultivated a reputation for virtuosity, refined sound, and imaginative programming, connecting with audiences for more than a decade. Recently, we had the privilege of hearing them at the world premiere of Tõnu Kõrvits's double concerto Aroha with the Tallinn Chamber Orchestra in February 2025, a work commissioned within a Ministry-supported residency. Their performance was a compelling demonstration of their ability to bring new music to life with sensitivity and brilliance.

The Aavik Duo is not only critically acclaimed but also commercially successful, with sold-out concerts and enthusiastic audiences both in Estonia and abroad. Their presence on American stages would be of significant artistic value.

For these reasons, I strongly recommend approval of their P-1 visa application.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Katre Väli', with a horizontal line extending to the right.

Katre Väli
Head of the Arts Department

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