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FOR RELEASE Friday, February 5, 2021

## The Viennese Winter Ball returns on March 13<sup>th</sup> as a virtual gala

*The event will showcase Canadian musicians and offer dining and dancing at home to support Music and Beyond's young people's initiatives*

Ottawa, Friday, February 5, 2021 – Music and Beyond announces that the **Viennese Winter Ball**, an event celebrating Austrian music and culture, will sparkle this year as a virtual gala of music and dance. Hosted by Her Excellency, **The Right Honourable Michaëlle Jean** and internationally-renowned tenor **Ben Heppner**, the Ball will take place on **Saturday, March 13**, from 6:00 pm to 11:00 pm (EST). It will feature Viennese music performed by some of Canada's finest musicians and will introduce Austria's new Ambassador to Canada, **Sylvia Meier-Kajbic** as Patron of the Ball.

In keeping with its mission to build new audiences for music and the arts, Music and Beyond invites music and dance lovers from everywhere in the world to enjoy the Ball from the comfort of their homes. While tickets for the event—one of Canada's most elegant cultural galas—have cost hundreds of dollars in previous years, this year's virtual Ball will be completely free. Performers will include flautist **Lara Deutsch**, winner of the 2019-2020 Prix Goyer; **Kimball Sykes**, principal clarinetist of the National Arts Centre Orchestra; violinist **Jonathan Crow**, Concertmaster of the Toronto Symphony Orchestra; violinist **Sara Mastrangelo**; **David Marks**, the associate principal violist with the National Arts Centre Orchestra; cellist **Julian Armour**; double bassist **Paul Mach**; pianist **Frédéric Lacroix**; organist **Matthew Larkin** on harmonium; and harpist **Caroline Léonardelli**.

There will be a special dance performance by **Alina Safonova** and **Vadim Safonov** of the Arthur Murray Dance Studio, the Official Dance Partner of the Viennese Winter Ball. Leading up to the Ball, the **Arthur Murray Dance Studio** will offer virtual dance lessons with special prices for Ball attendees so couples can learn ballroom dancing at home.

As part of Music and Beyond's comprehensive **Young People's Strategy**, the Viennese Winter Ball will celebrate the importance of music in the lives of all young people. Not only will the

Ball create performance opportunities for young Ottawa musicians (stay tuned for details when the full programme is released), but **proceeds from the event** will benefit **Music and Beyond's young people's initiatives** including enhanced programming for young people at its Summer Festival, more young people's concerts, and events such as the Ottawa Family Music Expo.

**Funds will be raised through sponsorships, an online auction, and donations.**

Attendees can order dinner at home from one of the Ball's **partner restaurants**, or create their own gourmet dinner. It will be streamed on Music and Beyond's YouTube channel and on Rogers Television. A parallel Zoom meeting will allow people to join break-out rooms or join virtual tables to chat with other attendees. Guests can enjoy the event as a full evening of cocktails and dinner/wine, dancing, and even formal dress for the special evening. People can send in photos and videos and these will be posted on Music and Beyond's Zoom meeting, Facebook page, and Instagram page.

"I am delighted that, despite the challenges of COVID-19, we are able to continue the remarkable 25-year tradition of the Viennese Winter Ball," states Music and Beyond's Executive Director Julian Armour. "This is shaping up to be a very exciting and fun event! I have always thought the Ball was one of the most glamorous events I have ever been to. It is wonderful that people now have a chance to bring that magic right into their homes."

Although the Viennese Winter Ball 2021 can be enjoyed for free, attendees are asked to make a donation or participate in an online auction. People can show support for the restaurant industry by purchasing a gift certificate to their favourite restaurant and donating it to the auction. Donors will receive a tax receipt for the full value of the certificates. "We all want to make sure that when this COVID-19 disaster is finally over, the restaurants we love will still be around for us to enjoy," states Julian Armour.

Music and Beyond would like to thank our Broadcast Partner Rogers TV for providing video crews and first-rate equipment to make all of this possible and the Steinway Piano Gallery Ottawa for providing a 9-foot concert grand piano.

Full details can be found at [www.musicandbeyond.ca](http://www.musicandbeyond.ca)

- 30 -

For more information on the Viennese Winter Ball, please contact:

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### **About the Viennese Winter Ball**

Launched in 1996 with the enthusiastic support of the Austrian Embassy and the Austrian-Canadian Council, Ottawa's Viennese Winter Ball is modeled after Vienna's Opereball and was officially sanctioned by the Austrian Government. It quickly became a must-attend event on the Ottawa gala calendar. After being organized for many years by dedicated volunteers, in 2015 Music and Beyond was approached by the Ball's organizing committee to take on this iconic annual event.

In addition to offering a truly magical evening, the Ball has always been dedicated to giving back to the community with over \$1 million raised over the past 25 years. In 2011, the Organizing Committee refined the focus of its charitable donations with proceeds going to arts and cultural programs supporting youth initiatives. Funds raised through the Ball support the young people's programming at Music and Beyond, showing a commitment to providing opportunities to ensure that music can be a part of all young people's lives.

The Viennese Winter Ball has is an unforgettable experience of delicious food, drink, and dancing as well as silent and live auctions and has always been considered one of Canada's most elegant and magical cultural galas.

In 2021, it will continue as a virtual gala, hosted by Her Excellency, The Right Honourable Michaëlle Jean and internationally-renowned tenor Ben Heppner. It will feature Viennese music performed by some of Canada's finest musicians and will introduce Austria's new Ambassador to Canada, Sylvia Meier-Kajbic as Patron of the Ball.

Attendees can order dinner at home from one of the Ball's partner restaurants, or create their own gourmet dinner. It will be streamed on Music and Beyond's YouTube channel and on Rogers Television. A parallel Zoom meeting will allow people to join break-out rooms or join virtual tables to chat with other attendees. Guests can enjoy the event as a full evening of cocktails and dinner/wine, dancing, and even formal dress for the special evening. People can send in photos and videos and these will be posted on Music and Beyond's Zoom meeting, Facebook page, and Instagram page.

As part of Music and Beyond's comprehensive Young People's Strategy, the Viennese Winter Ball celebrates the importance of music in the lives of all young people. Not only does the Ball create performance opportunities for young Ottawa musicians, but proceeds from the event benefit Music and Beyond's youth initiatives including enhanced programming for young people at its Summer Festival, more young people's concerts, and events such as the Ottawa Family Music Expo. Funds will be raised through sponsorships, an online auction, and donations. This year, the Ball is encouraging people to support their favourite restaurants by purchasing dinner to enjoy while they are "attending" the Ball, or by contributing gift certificates which will be auctioned off to support the young people's initiatives of Music and Beyond.

## About Music and Beyond

*”...the most creative and interesting classical festival in the country.”*

Christophe Huss from Le Devoir

Music and Beyond is a classical music and multi-disciplinary festival that takes place in Ottawa each July. Our mandate is to link music with a wide range of art forms and cultural disciplines. Music and Beyond also places a strong importance on developing new audiences for classical music, particularly young people.

In its first ten seasons, Music and Beyond has presented a total of over 900 concerts and events, as well as over 3,800 “mini-concerts”. The festival has presented some of Ottawa, Canada and the world’s greatest musicians, artists, performers and writers including legendary sopranos Kathleen Battle, Measha Brueggergosman and Emma Kirkby; world-renowned actor Christopher Plummer; saxophone superstar Branford Marsalis; conductor and harpsichordist Trevor Pinnock; pianists Garrick Ohlsson, Chilly Gonzales, Peter Serkin, Janina Fialkowska, Gregory Charles, Jan Lisiecki and Menahem Pressler; one of the world’s great tenors, Ben Heppner; violinists Sarah Chang, William Preucil, Rachel Barton Pine, Marc Djokic, Alexandre Da Costa, Martin Chalifour, Jonathan Crow and Mayumi Seiler; the Emerson, Borodin, Kronos, Auryn, Jupiter, Bennewitz, Fine Arts and New Orford string quartets; the world’s top piano trio, the Vienna Piano Trio; Milos, considered by most critics to be the world’s hottest guitarist; the Theatre of Early Music; John Rutter, the world’s most frequently performed living composer; the Canadian Brass; jazz pianist Oliver Jones; rock musician and classical violinist Sam Roberts; internationally renowned writers (and music fans) Vikram Seth, Sean Michaels and Peter Robinson; musical comedians P.D.Q. Bach and Igudesman & Joo; Chanticleer; the Hilliard Ensemble; the National Arts Centre Orchestra, I Musici de Montréal, Thirteen Strings and Les Violons du Roy. The festival has always had a strong commitment to Ottawa musicians, composers and other artists.

The festival has garnered consistently excellent reviews and the highest levels of audience satisfaction. According to 2019 surveys, 98.3% were satisfied with the 2019 festival, with 93.2% expressing a high level of satisfaction. 98.7% said they would recommend it to others. 99.1% say they are coming back in 2020. Almost everyone said that Music and Beyond enhanced their image of the National Capital Region.

Christophe Huss from Le Devoir (Montréal) called Music and Beyond “*...the most creative and interesting classical festival in the country.*”

In 2018, Music and Beyond was named “Event of the Year” at the Ottawa Tourism Awards. Music and Beyond has always taken its digital presence very seriously. Our web site had visits from 146 different countries in 2019. One of our videos has so far received 3.4 million views - this is roughly the total live audience we would get in 70 years.

Over the past 10 years, Music and Beyond has produced a number of very successful radio broadcasts with CBC and three television broadcasts for EWTN which were seen around the world in 140 countries. Our digital marketing has been extremely effective. We partnered with the Canadian Tulip Festival in 2020 to produce 11 digital presentations which have been remarkably successful.

In 2020, Music and Beyond was forced to cancel its live festival, due to the COVID-19 pandemic. However, in July and August, 2020, it released an ambitious series of 100 videos, and presented over 100 free outdoor mini-concerts. Our annual Christmas with Music and Beyond went virtual in 2020, and has so far received 25,000 views.

Music and Beyond will continue with digital programming for the foreseeable future. On March 13<sup>th</sup>, 2021, we will present the annual Viennese Winter Ball in a virtual edition that will be enjoyed all around the world.

After twelve years, Music and Beyond now belongs in an elite category with North America's most important classical music festivals and Canada's most respected cultural organizations.