



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

August 7, 2019

2020-21 DEBUT ATLANTIC ARTISTS ANNOUNCED!

HALIFAX, NS – Debut Atlantic is pleased to announce another impressive line-up of artists for the 2020-21 Season! Partnering with presenters throughout Atlantic Canada, these extraordinary artists will tour communities throughout the region.

Bridge & Wolak, Accordion and Clarinet (September 11-27, 2020)

An internationally acclaimed duo, these artists are pushing the limits of their instruments and musical styles into the 21st Century. With deft virtuosity and endless wit, they perform a uniquely orchestrated repertoire of classical, world, and jazz fusion. “Watch and be amazed!” (CBC).

Thalea String Quartet (October 9-25, 2020)

Formed in 2014, the quartet is dedicated to bringing timeless music to audiences from all walks of life. They have taken their “vibrant performance” and “sincere expressivity” (S.F. Classical Voice) across Europe and North America. Atlantic Canada is next!

Kevin Ahfat, Piano (November 6-22, 2020)

As a pianist that “leaves no question about his riveting presentation and technical finesse” (Seattle Times), this artist has a “bold, boundary pushing, millennial style matched by refined execution” (Vanguard Seattle)—praise that is supported by winning three prizes at the 79th Orchestre Symphonique de Montréal / Manuvie Competition.

Aronian & Crozman, Violin and Cello (February 12-28, 2021)

Two powerhouse soloists join forces to create a duo that cannot be missed! Respectively praised for “balancing emotional weight and technical virtuosity” (Cultural Spot L.A.) and “a profound musical imagination” (Toronto Concert Reviews), Aronian and Crozman are poised to dazzle the East Coast.

Regard Persan, Tanbour, Gheychak, Kamanche, and Percussion (March 12-28, 2021)

Bridging the gap between tradition and modernity, this dynamic trio of Irano-Canadian musicians creates music that is aurally timeless. The innovative ensemble, based in Montreal, explores the sounds of Persian music through each member’s respective instrument.

In addition to concerts, Debut Atlantic is committed to educational and community outreach, with a focus on connecting with and engaging community members outside of the concert hall. In-school performances, workshops, masterclasses, and live-streamed video conferencing sessions form the core

of this pursuit. The offerings are rounded out by pop-up performances and partnerships with community organizations

Debut Atlantic wishes to recognize the partners and sponsors that come together to bring these incredible artists to communities and venues of all sizes across our region. Touring these artists would not be possible without the generous support of sustaining partners, including Canada Council for the Arts, Arts Nova Scotia, and the Province of New Brunswick. Debut would also like to thank its educational partner, the Nova Scotia Department of Education; and its season partners, including the Halifax Regional Municipality, The Lloyd Carr-Harris Foundation, Support4Culture, the Craig Foundation, Pink Larkin, Halcraft Printers, Strategic Arts Management, and InnVest Hotels (Comfort Inn).

Full details on Debut Atlantic's concert season and education programs can be found at www.debutatlantic.ca. **Please see enclosed artist biographies for Debut Atlantic's 2020-21 Artists.**

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As one of Canada's most prestigious classical music organizations, **Debut Atlantic** is committed to developing young artists and establishing new initiatives that enhance the cultural life of Atlantic Canada. Since 1979 it has treated Atlantic audiences to Canada's most promising young musicians, featuring 40-50 concerts through the four Atlantic Provinces each season. Celebrating 40 years, Debut Atlantic has featured over 400 artists, gracing the stages of venues from Happy Valley-Goose Bay, Newfoundland and Labrador to Yarmouth, Nova Scotia.

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For further information, please contact:

Erin Sparks – Executive Director
Debut Atlantic
902-429-6812
erin@debutatlantic.ca

-Or-

Elizabeth Upson Perez – Program Officer
Debut Atlantic
902-429-6812
elizabeth@debutatlantic.ca

2020-21 Season Artist Biographies

Kornel Wolak (clarinet) and **Michael Bridge** (digital accordion) are an internationally acclaimed duo, pushing the limits of their instruments and musical styles into the 21st Century. Playing classical showpieces, jazz ballades, and fiery folk music, Bridge & Wolak began collaborating in 2012 and have since toured across Canada, Poland, France, and Ecuador. Fun-loving gentlemen (with seven degrees in music performance), they offer a complete suite of educational programming. With deft virtuosity and endless wit, Bridge & Wolak have been called the “Victor Borges of the 21st Century.” In demand on three continents, they were nominated for the B.C. Touring Artist of the Year award in 2019. “Watch and be amazed!” (CBC). **(Touring September 11-27, 2020).**

Top prize winners at both the 2018 Fischhoff national Chamber Music Competition and the Chamber Music Yellow Springs Competition, the **Thalea String Quartet** is dedicated to bringing timeless music to audiences from all walks of life. Formed in 2014 at the Zephyr International Chamber Music Festival, the Thalea String Quartet has been praised for their “vibrant performance” and “sincere virtuosity” (S.F. Classical Voice). The quartet has performed recitals across Europe and North America, and was the first quartet-in-residence at the San Francisco Conservatory of Music from 2015-2017. Thalea was recently named the Young Professional String Quartet at the Butler School of Music. Christopher Whitley (violin) performs on the 1700 “Taft” Stradivari, generously on loan by the Canada Council for the Arts Musical Instrument Bank. **(Touring October 9-25, 2020).**

As a pianist that “leaves no question about his riveting presentation and technical finesse” (Seattle Times), Canadian-born pianist **Kevin Ahfat** is acclaimed to be “poised to become one of the young heirs of the classical piano realm, with a bold, boundary-pushing, millennial style matched by refined execution” (Vanguard Seattle). Highlights of recent seasons include a return to Seattle Symphony at Benaroya Hall for its first-ever Shostakovich Concerto Festival – a two-evening celebration of all six of Dimitri Shostakovich’s piano, violin, and cello concertos with violinist Aleksey Semenenko and cellist Edgar Moreau. Ahfat was named one of CBC Music’s “30 Hot Canadian Classical Musicians Under 30” in 2018 and was recently awarded Second Prize, Prize for Best Performance of the Canadian Work, and the Orford Musique Prize at the 79th Orchestre Symphonique de Montréal / Manuvie Competition in Montreal. **(Touring November 6-22, 2020).**

Two powerhouse soloists join forces to form **Aronian & Crozman**, a violin and cello duo that cannot be missed! Winner of the 2018-19 Sylva Gelber Music Foundation Award, violinist Eva Aronian has performed extensively across the globe in such prestigious halls as Carnegie Hall, Montreal’s Maison Symphonique, and Milan’s Teatro dal Verme. Her performances have been praised as a “veritable how-to in balancing emotional weight and technical virtuosity” (Cultural Spot L.A.). Aronian plays on a ca. 1700 Giovannie Tononi violin, generously on loan from the Canada Council for the Arts Musical Instrument Bank. Described as a “mature artist with a profound musical imagination” (Toronto Concert Reviews), cellist Cameron Crozman is being hailed as one of Canada’s leading young cellists. He was the youngest recipient of the Canada Council Michael Measure’s Prize and was one of 6 cellists from around the world chosen to take part in the Gautier Capuçon’s 2016-17 Classe d’Excellence at the Louis Vuitton

Foundation. Crozman plays on the ca. 1696 “Bonjour” Stradivarius cello and the ca. 1830 “Shaw” Adam cello bow, generously on loan from the Canada Council for the Arts Instrument Bank. **(Touring February 12-28, 2021).**

Founded by three Irano-Canadian musicians living in Montreal, **Regard Persan** is an innovative ensemble, with each member exploring the sounds of Persian music through their respective instruments. Bridging the gap between tradition and modernity, the trio seeks to create contemporary music that is aurally timeless. Formed after the trio’s magical concert premiere at the 2013 Garage Concerts series in Montreal, Regard has performed in Canada, Europe, and China. Regard Persan performs on the tambour (the preferred instrument of Kurdish dervishes), gheychak (a string instrument used by the Qalandars of Baluchistan), kamanche (Persian spike fiddle), and percussion instruments from Iran. **(March 12-28, 2021).**