

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

October 27, 2020

**PIANIST KEVIN AHFAT SET TO TAKE ATLANTIC CANADIAN AUDIENCES TO “FOREIGN LANDS AND PLACES” WITH NEW DIGITAL PERFORMANCE**

**HALIFAX, NS -** As a pianist that "leaves no question about his riveting presentation and technical finesse" (Seattle Times), Canadian-born pianist Kevin Ahfat is "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). Named one of CBC Music's 30 Hot Canadian Classical Musicians Under 30 in 2018, Ahfat has performed throughout North America and abroad, including at the Maison symphonique in Montreal, at the Harbourfront Centre in Toronto, Merkin Hall in New York, and with the Kaleidoscope Chamber Orchestra in Los Angeles.

Kevin Ahfat is set to launch his digital performance titled "Of Foreign Lands and Places…", designed to transport listeners to a distinct scene, culture, and story from far-reaching locations. From the foot-stomping dance of an arrogant cowboy in Argentina, to children playing hide and seek in the countryside of Germany, to being chased by the terrifying witch Baba-Yaga in the forests of Russia, and to the groovy rhythms of Cuba – Ahfat's music will take you on a vivid and visceral ride. This digital performance will be presented throughout Atlantic Canada.

*Kevin Ahfat will perform for the \_\_\_\_\_\_ at \_\_\_\_\_ pm on \_\_\_\_\_\_. Additional information on how to watch this concert will be located on the \_\_\_\_\_\_\_ website.*

In addition to concert engagements, Kevin Ahfat will be working with young students through the Debut Goes to School – 2020/21 Digital Program. This season, Debut Goes to School offers students throughout Atlantic Canada virtual access to outstanding classical and world musicians. Through this program, students are provided the opportunity to participate in live, interactive learning sessions and other events for various age groups and ability levels.

Debut Atlantic wants to recognize the partners and sponsors that come together to bring these incredible artists to communities and venues of all sizes across our region. It would not be possible without the generous support of sustaining partners, including the 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).

This performance will be featured by presenters across Atlantic Canada. Please see the enclosed artist biography and come share in a unique performance, rich with passion and exploration.

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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. Celebrating 41 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.

Full details on Debut Atlantic’s concert seasons and educational programs can be found at [www.debutatlantic.ca](http://www.debutatlantic.ca).

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**BIOGRAPHY—Kevin Ahfat**

As a pianist that “leaves no question about his riveting presentation and technical finesse” (Seattle Times), Canadian pianist Kevin Ahfat is “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). Possessing “a balanced mix of expressiveness and virtuosity” (Musical America), he “summons plenty of thunderpower in the big moments, but clearly values musicianship over mere showmanship” (American Record Guide). Ahfat was named one of CBC Music’s 30 Hot Canadian Classical Musicians Under 30 in 2018 and subsequently released a live recording of Brahms from CBC’s Studio 211.

Highlights of recent seasons include engagements throughout North America and abroad, including at the Maison symphonique in Montreal, Harbourfront Centre in Toronto, Merkin Hall in New York, and the Kaleidoscope Chamber Orchestra in Los Angeles. Additionally, Ahfat continues to perform and record with the ARC Ensemble, one of Canada’s foremost cultural forces. Further highlights include a return to the Seattle Symphony at Benaroya Hall for its first-ever Shostakovich Concerto Festival, a partnership with Richard Alston & Juilliard Dance in their recreation of Alston’s Sheer Bravado (2006) in New York, as well as giving the inaugural masterclass & recital for the Las Vegas Masterclass Series at the University of Nevada, Las Vegas. Ahfat has had the privilege of sharing the stage with renowned artists across many genres, including Jean-Yves Thibaudet, Sō Percussion, David Finckel, Derek Bermel, Joshua Roman, and Joaquin Valdepenas.

In early 2018, Ahfat was thrilled to give the North American Premiere of Camille Saint-Saens’ Third Sonata for Cello and Piano (1919), recently published by Barenreiter-Verlag, with a long-time artistic collaborator, cellist Juliette Herlin. Last season, they gave the Sonata its Midwest Premiere on the Dame Myra Hess Memorial Concert Series in Chicago; the Canadian Premiere in Toronto later that year. In anticipation of this premiere, Ahfat filmed & produced a mini-documentary titled Soirée pour Camille, a short film documenting the historical context of the work, the artistic partnership of Ahfat & Herlin, and their joint exploration of French music. Continuing his dynamic exploration of music in-tandem with film, he recently partnered with Riddle Films to release a cinematic performance of Mussorgsky’s Pictures at an Exhibition, filmed live at Toronto’s Koerner Hall.

Ahfat recently worked with Juilliard Global Ventures as part of the Juilliard Open Classroom team, where he helped develop new digital learning environments to reach musicians across the globe. In this capacity, he acted as a teacher, curriculum writer, and course builder for several online courses, including Juilliard Open Classroom’s first release: Sharpen Your Piano Artistry. He was a curriculum writer for Piano Preludes: Bach, Chopin, and Debussy, offered through the online education platform edX.

Ahfat completed principal studies at the Juilliard School in New York under the tutelage of Joseph Kalichstein and Stephen Hough, and recently finished his time in-residence as a 2018-19 Rebanks Fellow at the Royal Conservatory in Toronto. He is a grateful recipient of a 2019 Sylva Gelber Music Foundation Award.