



The Ottawa Viennese Winter Ball welcomes new ambassador, new orchestra

February 7, 2009 – Ottawa, ON – For the thirteenth year, the Ottawa Viennese Ball - presented by BMO Harris Private Banking - will dazzle guests with gastronomy and musical delights. Tonight, 350 guests will feast, dance and celebrate Austrian culture in what has become a traditional highlight to brighten Ottawa's February blues.

This year, the Ball welcomes Austria's newest ambassador to Canada, His Excellency Werner Brandstetter, who, along with his wife Leonie-Maria, arrived in Ottawa last Fall. Ambassador Brandstetter readily and graciously agreed to take on the helm as honorary patron of the Ball, succeeding Otto Ditz.

Musicians from the acclaimed Toronto Grand Salon Orchestra, led by conductor and trumpet virtuoso, Robert Herriot, will make their debut at the Ball. Uniquely, long-time supporter of the event, Jim Hall of Frequentis Canada, will be privileged to participate as a guest conductor in Strauss' famous Radetzky March, bringing a distinctive local touch to the evening.

Guests will have the opportunity to enjoy the performance of Lidia Baich, considered one of the most extraordinary young violinists on the international concert scene today. This stunning performer will be accompanied by piano sensation Matthias Fletzberger who is including the Ball as part of his return to the classical music scene after a 17-year absence.

16 debutantes and their cavaliers from local high schools will perform time-honoured Austrian waltzes for guests, a tradition of the event. The debutantes and cavaliers are local high school students who auditioned and practiced for months to be a part of this memorable event.

The 13th edition of the Ottawa Viennese Winter Ball will start with a champagne reception in the Foyer of the National Gallery of Canada. Guests will then indulge in a gastronomic delight created by Westin Ottawa Executive Chef, Nelson Borges, including an assortment of appetizers, a pepper-crusted beef tenderloin, foie gras and, of course, a sumptuous dessert.

“An event of this magnitude requires the generous collaboration and hard work of a multitude of people,” says Shawn Gibbons, chair of the organizing committee. “We are pleased to welcome Ambassador Brandstetter and his wife to their first ball and hope our guests and sponsors - especially BMO Harris Private Banking who has returned as a Platinum Sponsor for the 8th consecutive year - will enjoy every minute of this evening. We wouldn't be here without them.”

Champions for Children to benefit from the Ball

Champions for Children will benefit from proceeds from the event. In its 13-year history, the event has contributed nearly \$600,000 to charities.

About the Ottawa Viennese Winter Ball

The Ottawa Viennese Winter Ball is a not-for-profit organization supported by a volunteer organizing committee. The Ball is one of only five internationally sanctioned Viennese balls by the Austrian Government.

- 30 -

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