



For immediate Release

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Teen with autism set to dazzle at Toronto's grandest concert venue

TORONTO (April 12, 2011) -- Ron Adea is an 18-year-old budding concert pianist preparing for the biggest night of his life. Ron will be performing at THE AUTISTS Gala and Art Auction on May 17 at Koerner Hall in front of Toronto's top arts supporters, international buyers and collectors, leading philanthropists and prominent business people. What's especially impressive about Ron is that he is diagnosed with autism. Though Ron has difficulty with learning, social interaction and communicating, he is proving that autism is no barrier to letting his prodigious talent shine.

Ron is one of many talented artists with autism who will be performing and showcasing their art at THE AUTISTS, side by side with leading contemporary Canadian and international artists and performers. Works by William S. Burroughs, Graham Coughtry, David Bolduc, Shary Boyle, Shayne Dark, Ashoona and 30 other great artists will be on auction. Notable performers include Gemini Award nominee Shawn Byfield and Vito Rezza – leader of the critically acclaimed and Juno-nominated jazz ensemble 5 After 4.

In his endearingly humble way, Ron says he is thrilled to be performing at Toronto's grandest concert venue, Koerner Hall. Having started piano as part of music therapy aimed at helping him overcome difficulties with autism, Ron is truly blossoming. John Alcorn, Music Director of THE AUTISTS and 2009 National Jazz Award winner, says, "Ron's performances capture the richness, passion, complexity and nuance of Chopin, Beethoven and Debussy in a manner that is both inspiring and moving".

Executive Director of Geneva Centre for Autism, Margaret Whelan, describes THE AUTISTS as a fundraising extravaganza in celebration of the art and astonishing gifts of some young people with autism. "The goal of everyone working in the autism field," says Whelan, "is to see individuals with autism be independent and able to fully participate in their communities. Apart from raising much-needed funds, THE AUTISTS provides an opportunity for individuals with autism to reveal their talents."

Other artists with autism joining Ron include Samantha Mutis, a rising jazz performer currently on an academic scholarship with the prestigious University of Toronto's Bachelor of Performance/Jazz Vocal Program; Michael Moon, a Toronto-based composer, musician and performer; Kaitrin Beechey, an artist who composes elaborate ink drawings, Paul Miller; Melanie Gruson-Wood and many more.

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The key event at THE AUTISTS is the live art auction, curated, by acclaimed contemporary Canadian artist, and Member of the Order of Canada, Charles Pachter. Presiding at the hammer will be Stephen Ranger, the country's most respected auctioneer. THE AUTISTS kicks off with a champagne reception with gourmet delicacies, followed by several short entertainment segments and a silent auction offering a range of enticing items including, naturally, art by gifted artists with autism. The live auction then commences in the main auditorium.

Proceeds from THE AUTISTS will support Geneva Centre for Autism and its programs that benefit over 4,000 children and youth with autism. **For more information and ticket visit:** www.theautistsgala.com

About Geneva Centre for Autism: Founded in 1974, Geneva Centre for Autism is a Toronto-based international leader in the delivery of clinical intervention services and training. The Centre influences policy, supports research and delivers innovative services that make a life-altering difference to over 4,000 children, youth and adults with an Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) and their families. www.autism.net

THE AUTISTS: THE AUTISTS gala and art auction is a one-night fundraising extravaganza in celebration and support of children and youth at Geneva Centre for Autism. The exclusive Gala evening includes a champagne reception with gourmet delicacies; entertainment by international stars; performances by gifted musicians with autism; and a silent auction displaying a stunning selection of items including art by gifted artists with autism.

Date: Tuesday, May 17, 2011

Venue: Koerner Hall, TELUS Centre for Performance and Learning

Time: 5:30 pm

Tickets: \$195 per person

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