

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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Early Music Vancouver Starts Season on a High Note with **- Handel and His Rivals -**

Renowned American soprano Amanda Forsythe joins the Pacific Baroque Orchestra for a thrilling programme of 18th century opera arias

Vancouver, BC – Early Music Vancouver (EMV) presents *Handel and His Rivals – Opera Arias from 18th Century London* at Christ Church Cathedral on Friday, September 16, 2016 at 7:30pm. GRAMMY Award-winning soprano Amanda Forsythe will join Music Director Alexander Weimann, and the Pacific Baroque Orchestra in giving wildly virtuosic voice to the tempestuous queens, heartbroken lovers, and mythic figures who populated London’s opera houses in the early 1700’s.

“It took a while for Italian opera to catch on in 18th century London, but with the help of the young, ambitious, and prodigiously talented Handel, it soon became an obsession with the British public,” says EMV Executive & Artistic Director Matthew White. “When Handel arrived on the scene, he was just back from formative years in Italy where he performed alongside, and composed for the greatest operatic and instrumental virtuosos of the age. His subsequent success and virtual monopoly of the market for Italian opera in England was, for many years, unquestioned.”

“By the 1730’s, however, he was a victim of his own success and was faced with rival composers and imitators who also sought to capitalize on Britain’s newfound love for opera,” White continues. “This first concert in our 2016/17 season celebrates the quality of music being performed in 18th century London by Handel and some of his rivals with the help of one the most celebrated young voices in opera today.”

The program will feature virtuosic arias for soprano composed by G.F. Handel for the Royal Academy of Music, as well as arias written by less well known rival composers like Bononcini, Hasse, and Porpora. These rival works were all performed at the Opera of the Nobility, a company which managed, if only briefly, to put Handel out of business. Well known, arias will include ‘Mio caro bene’ and ‘Se’l mio duol’ from Handel’s opera *Rodelinda* as well as ‘Da tempeste’ and ‘Piangero’ from *Giulio Cesare*.

Praised by Opera news for her “wonderful agility and silvery top notes”, Amanda Forsythe’s return to Vancouver has been highly anticipated by EMV audiences since her spectacular 2014 performance in Handel’s *Il Trionfo del Tempo*. Since 2014, her career has continued to grow. Recent highlights include appearances at the Rossini Opera Festival, Seattle Opera, a debut with the Chicago Symphony, and a performance at the Royal Opera house in Covent Garden with John Eliot Gardiner and Juan Diego Florez. Forsythe also recently completed an internationally touring duet program with critically acclaimed counter-tenor Philippe Jaroussky, with stops at Amsterdam’s Concertgebouw, the Wiener Konzerthaus, and Versailles. She is now considered one of the world’s top operatic stars specializing in Baroque and classical repertoire.

Forsythe will perform alongside the Pacific Baroque Orchestra (PBO), under the musical direction of its Artistic Director Alexander Weimann. Recognized as one of Canada’s most exciting and innovative ensembles performing “early music for modern ears,” PBO brings the music of the past up to date by performing with cutting edge style and enthusiasm. Featuring all of the region’s best “period” instrumentalists, the orchestra all use original 18th century instruments or copies of original instruments and

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are experts in what is known as “historical performance practice”. This gives modern audiences the opportunity to hear the music played in a way that the composers would still recognize today. Far from being an exercise in historical recreation, this approach can make this music sound as fresh and exciting as when it was first composed.

Handel and His Rivals will perform at Christ Church Cathedral in Victoria on Saturday, September 17 as part of The Pacific Northwest Baroque Masterworks series.

ABOUT EARLY MUSIC VANCOUVER (earlymusic.bc.ca)

For more than 45 years, Early Music Vancouver (EMV) has dedicated itself to fostering an understanding and appreciation of musical treasures from the Renaissance, Baroque, and Classical periods. Currently under the leadership of Matthew White – renowned countertenor and founding director of the Québec-based ensemble *Les Voix Baroques* – EMV continues to garner international acclaim as the largest presenter of early music in Canada, and as one of the most active and innovative organizations in its field in North America. EMV is proud of its educational outreach initiatives that include its popular, annual summer festival at UBC’s School of Music; a new Baroque Mentorship Orchestra; community lectures; and instrument instruction and preservation.

LISTING INFORMATION

**Early Music Vancouver presents:
*Handel and His Rivals***

Date: Friday, September 16, 2016 at 7:30pm

Pre-Concert Talk: A dialogue with Amanda Forsythe and Alexander Weimann hosted by EMV’s Executive & Artistic Director Matthew White
6:45pm at Christ Church Cathedral

Address: Christ Church Cathedral
690 Burrard St. Vancouver, BC

Ticket prices: From \$17.50

Box Office: earlymusic.bc.ca or 604-822-2697

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For further media information, contact
Sarah Ghosh T: 604.558.2400 ext. 508 C: 604.346.3774
sghosh@mpmgarts.com

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