

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
June 27, 2017

Vancouver Bach Festival Returns and Grows with Dazzling Lineup of World-Class Artists

Early Music Vancouver Marks 500th Anniversary of the Protestant Reformation by Celebrating Music's Power to Transform

Vancouver, BC – Early Music Vancouver (EMV) proudly presents the return of the **Vancouver Bach Festival, August 1 – 11, 2017** at the **Christ Church Cathedral** in the heart of downtown, and at the **Chan Centre for the Performing Arts**. Following the success of last summer's inaugural festival, EMV offers a remarkable 14 concerts, ranging from intimate chamber music programmes to a full Passion Oratorio, and features over 60 performers including guest artists from all over the world.

Inspired by the 500th Anniversary of Martin Luther's Protestant Reformation, this year's festival is a celebration of music's supreme ability to transform and persuade. Furthermore, the festival programming fittingly honours the genius of Bach and other composers who were so profoundly shaped by Luther's influence. Highlight concerts include Matt Haimovitz's intriguing new perspective on Bach's *Cello Suites* in ***Overtures to Bach***, as well as the Vancouver premiere of ***The Fountains of Israel***: a relatively unknown, but moving masterpiece by composer Johann Schein, who occupied Bach's position in Leipzig exactly one century before the iconic creator. The festival reaches its stirring finale with Bach's monumental ***St. John Passion*** on Friday, August 11 at the Chan Centre. Special guests performing in 2017 include two world-class vocal ensembles from Europe: **Cinquecento** and **Gli Angeli Genève**, whose internationally-acclaimed members will perform both as ensembles and soloists in other programmes throughout the festivities.

"Our second annual Vancouver Bach Festival is a celebration of music's power to move people's hearts and minds," says Matthew White, Executive and Artistic Director of EMV. "More than a historical examination, this year's festival is an incredible opportunity to be inspired and transformed by wonderful music and gifted artists from all over the world."

J.S. Bach (1685 – 1750) is regarded as one of the greatest composers in Western musical history. His legacy includes some of the most beautiful and well-crafted music ever written. Almost three centuries after Bach's passing, his vast catalogue of works are still revered, studied, and reinterpreted by music lovers across the globe.

The Vancouver Bach Festival 2017 programme includes:

Overtures to Bach

August 1 at 6pm and 9pm

Renowned as a musical pioneer, Canadian cellist **Matt Haimovitz** performs four of Bach's beloved *Cello Suites* preceded by new commissions written by composers including **Philip Glass** and **David Sanford** that anticipate, reflect, and transform the originals. Haimovitz's new 'overtures' build a bridge from the master's time to our own, and demonstrate that Bach's influence is even more important and pervasive today than it was in the 18th Century. Between each performance there will be a dinner break for those who would like to attend both hour-long events.

Schumann Dichterliebe and Brahms Four Serious Songs

August 2 at 1pm

Internationally acclaimed Canadian baritone **Tyler Duncan** and his partner on and off stage, internationally renowned collaborative pianist **Erika Switzer**, perform Schumann's beloved song cycle with an original 19th century fortepiano.

Songs of Religious Upheaval: Byrd, Tallis, Tye – Music from Reformation England

August 2 at 7:30pm (Pre-concert talk 6:45pm)

Audiences who love Renaissance polyphonic choral music will delight in **Cinquecento**, a premiere vocal quintet with members from five European countries. For this concert, the ensemble will share the emotionally charged and harmonically rich Latin Church music of William Byrd, Thomas Tallis, and Christopher Tye. These exquisite polyphonies were composed during the height of the English Reformation, representing a time of deep conflict and religious turmoil.

Lutheran Vespers: Songs for Troubled Times

August 3 at 1pm (An EMV Emerging Artists Event – Suggested Donation of \$20)

Eleven Vancouver based performers offer a complete Lutheran vespers. Written to provide comfort and consolation to churchgoers following Europe's devastating Thirty Years' War and its aftermath, this music had a huge influence on the young J.S. Bach.

Bach's Italian Concerto

August 3 at 7:30pm (Pre-concert talk 6:45pm)

Hear two of Bach's most iconic works for keyboard - the *French Overture* and the *Italian Concerto* - performed by internationally acclaimed harpsichordist **Alexander Weimann**. **Stephan MacLeod**, esteemed Swiss baritone and founding musical director of European ensemble Gli Angeli Genève, joins Weimann for two virtuosic cantatas *Dalla Guerra Amorosa* by Handel, and *Amore Traditore* by Bach.

Conversions: Mendelssohn, Moscheles and Bach

August 4 at 1pm

Fortepianist **Byron Schenkman** & cellist **Michael Unterman** perform works by Mendelssohn and Moscheles, two Jewish artists who converted to Christianity to conform to social norms.

Handel in Italy: Virtuoso Cantatas

August 4 at 7:30pm (Pre-concert talk 6:45pm)

For this program, two of Europe's most accomplished young Baroque vocalists, **Terry Wey** and **Jenny Högström**, perform virtuosic cantatas and fiery love duets by Handel from his early Italian period, along with a duet by Agostino Steffani, one of Handel's mentors.

Playing with B-a-c-H: Sonatas for Violin by Telemann, Pisendel and J.S. Bach

August 8 at 1pm

One of North America's most respected baroque violinists, Seattle's **Tekla Cunningham** performs a solo Bach partita, a Pisendel solo sonata, and two solo Telemann fantasias.

Before Bach: "The Fountains of Israel" by Johann Schein (1623)

August 8 at 7:30 pm (Pre-concert talk 6:45pm)

Leading European vocal ensemble, **Gli Angeli Genève**, will take audiences on a journey back in time a century before Bach when music in Northern Germany came under the influence of a new and powerful musical language known as the Italian madrigal – Johann Schein was one of three German composers who successfully adapted and converted this new form to fit German language. The ensemble will perform Schein's traditional masterpiece *Israelis Brunnlein* or *The Fountains of Israel*, an exquisite collection of madrigals written on biblical texts from the Lutheran Bible.

Bach for Two Flutes

August 9 at 1pm

Revered West Coast Baroque flutists **Janet See** and **Soile Stratkauskas** beguile with the sweet, matched voices of Baroque flutes. **Christopher Bagan** joins on harpsichord.

Heavenly Love: Sacred Arias for Counter-Tenor

August 9, at 7:30pm (Pre-concert talk 6:45pm)

Alex Potter, hailed by the International Record Review as a "rising star of the counter-tenor world," treats audiences to pieces set to religious text that were originally not intended for church, but for entertainment or private devotion in family homes. Using the diverse colours of counter-tenor, lute, organ and viola da gamba, this programme presents music by Buxtehude, Schütz, Purcell, and Strozzi, and explores their heartfelt and passionate responses to these beautiful texts.

Bach Transcriptions – Victoria Baroque Players

August 10 at 1pm

Bach's trio sonatas for organ are given new life in transcriptions for chamber ensemble

/more...

Music of Missions and Mystery: Latin American Baroque

August 10, at 7:30pm (Pre-concert talk 6:45pm)

In this unique programme, **Pacific MusicWorks**, led by GRAMMY award-winner **Stephen Stubbs**, explores works written as part of the Catholic Church's Counter-Reformation. Audiences will hear a vibrant mix of Italian, Spanish, African, and indigenous elements that inspired the new musical style heard in cathedrals and missions of colonial Latin America that continue to speak to us today.

J.S. Bach St. John Passion at the Chan Centre

August 11, at 7:30 pm (Pre-concert talk 6:45pm)

Join the **Pacific Baroque Orchestra**, the **Vancouver Cantata Singers**, and a cast of seven international Bach specialists for a dramatic presentation of one of the greatest works in the classical repertoire. Considered the closest thing that Bach came to writing an opera, *St. John Passion* is written mostly from Martin Luther's German translation of the Bible. Led by **Alexander Weimann**, the part of the narrator will be taken on by **Thomas Hobbs**, one of the leading 'Bach Evangelists' of our time.

To complement the artist lineup, EMV will offer an array of thought-provoking **film screenings** and **expert talks**, which audiences can enjoy with wine and refreshments in a relaxed atmosphere. To learn more, please visit:

<http://www.earlymusic.bc.ca/tickets/summer-festival/2017-vancouver-bach-festival-film-screenings-free/>

Enjoy any four concerts at the Vancouver Bach Festival for the price of three. Purchases of more than four concert packages will also receive a 25% discount.

For tickets and complete details of all Vancouver Bach Festival events, please visit: [earlymusic.bc.ca](http://www.earlymusic.bc.ca)

#VanBachFest

ABOUT EARLY MUSIC VANCOUVER ([earlymusic.bc.ca](http://www.earlymusic.bc.ca))

For 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: Vancouver Bach Festival

Dates:	August 1 – 11, 2017
Tickets:	\$10 – \$68
Address:	Christ Church Cathedral (690 Burrard Street) and The Chan Centre for the Performing Arts at UBC (6265 Crescent Road)
Box Office:	earlymusic.bc.ca or 604.822.2697
Publicity Materials:	mpmgarts.com/media/early-music-vancouver-vancouver-bach-festival/

-30-

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

MURRAY PATERSON
MARKETING GROUP

FORMERLY LAURA MURRAY PUBLIC RELATIONS