

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
December 12, 2019

EMV presents two nights of medieval concerts:

Benjamin Bagby brings *Beowulf: The Epic in Performance* to Vancouver Playhouse on January 11 and Sequentia performs Charms, Riddles and Elegies on January 10

Vancouver, BC – Join EMV at the **Vancouver Playhouse on Saturday January 11 at 7:30PM** for *Beowulf: The Epic in Performance* featuring **Benjamin Bagby**. For over 25 years, Bagby has toured the globe performing his one-man show to universal and enthusiastic acclaim. Armed with nothing but a medieval harp and his captivating stage presence, Bagby draws audiences into an ancient world of valiant heroes and evil monsters. Though this millennia-old epic poem has spawned countless re-imaginings in novels, movies and theatre, Bagby's dramatization has been uniquely successful. The New York Times says Bagby "comes as close to holding hundreds of people in a spell as ever a man has," calling it "much too rare an experience in theater."

"As any parent at bedtime can tell you, storytelling is deeply satisfying," explains Bagby. "I've been performing *Beowulf* for almost 30 years, and I find that as I age with this piece, it has become a part of me. I am able to live more fully in each moment and think less about how I am feeling, or what I am 'trying' to achieve. Sometimes it's simply an out-of-body experience. I try to leave the exhilaration to the listeners and at the end, I thank my harp, remove my good luck talismans, and look forward to enjoying a beer."

Bagby's telling is a remarkable, one-man *tour de force*. Reciting, chanting and singing the 11th century masterpiece in the original Anglo-Saxon, Bagby regales the gripping tale of the hero Beowulf slaying the monster Grendel, terrorizer of the Danes.

"All humans share a profound fear of losing control of the safety of their home, especially by an unknown and utterly malevolent power," explains Bagby. "It's a story about power and helplessness. We know that feeling today in our own world, but we have lost our belief that there are heroes who can solve our problems for us. And the Grendel we fear is in some cases a monster of our own creation."

Bagby is one of the world leaders of medieval music performance. He and the late Barbara Thornton formed Sequentia in 1977, creating over 70 innovative concert programmes of medieval music together. Ben was awarded a Lifetime Achievement Award from Early Music America in 2011 and currently teaches medieval music performance at the Université de Paris. Benjamin and Sequentia have been almost yearly guests on EMV's series since the 1980s and have collaborated with the organization on many summer courses in medieval music that have been career defining for many of the participants.

On **January 10, 7:30PM at Christ Church Cathedral, the day before Bagby's solo performance of *Beowulf***, he joins his Sequentia colleagues Norbert Rodenkirchen, Hanna Marti and Stef Conner, for **Charms, Riddles and Elegies**. This concert features music of the Anglo-Saxon and Germanic tribes of the Northern Europe sourced from the old Icelandic poetic *Edda*, *Beowulf*, and the few poems surviving in ancient songbooks such as *The Exeter Book*. The world of the pagan medieval north, just turning to Christianity, will be explored, showcasing songs of magic, healing, and fates. The featured instruments will include 6-string Germanic harps, triangular harps, wooden flutes and the rare and intriguing "swan-bone" flute.

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ABOUT EARLY MUSIC VANCOUVER (earlymusic.bc.ca)

Founded in 1970 and celebrating its 50th anniversary season in 2019-2020, Early Music Vancouver (EMV) has a long-standing international reputation for the presentation, production and study of classical and traditional repertoires using “historically informed performance practices”. Historically informed performance is based on two key aspects: the application of the stylistic and technical aspects of performance, known as performance practice; and the use of period instruments which may be reproductions of historical instruments that were in use at the time of the original composition.

EMV now offers the second largest program of its type in North America, presenting and producing an average of 40-50 concerts per year featuring internationally-renowned local, regional and guest artists. EMV has a Main Season that runs through the Fall, Winter, and Spring as well as a growing annual summer festival that was re-branded as the Vancouver Bach Festival in 2016. It also has substantial education and outreach programmes including the Baroque Orchestra Mentorship Programme and BC Scholarship Programme.

LISTING INFORMATION

Date:

Charms Riddles and Elegies - Friday, January 10, at Christ Church Cathedral
Beowulf: The Epic in Performance - Saturday, January 11 at the Vancouver Playhouse

Address:

690 Burrard, Vancouver, BC, V6C 2L1
Vancouver Playhouse, 600 Hamilton Street, Vancouver, BC, V6B 2P1

Ticket prices:

From \$18

Box Office:

earlymusic.bc.ca or 604-822-2697

Website:

earlymusic.bc.ca

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For further media information, contact
Laina Tanahara T: 604.732.1610 ext. 2002
staff@earlymusic.bc.ca