



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
November 1, 2023

Early Music Vancouver & Vancouver Chamber Choir Brighten Holiday Season with Christmas Classic, Handel's *Messiah*

Acclaimed baroque specialists partner with Vancouver Chamber Choir for their first joint performance of the holiday masterpiece, featuring Canadian and international soloists

Vancouver, BC – Early Music Vancouver (EMV) and the Vancouver Chamber Choir celebrate the festive season with the highly anticipated return of **Handel's *Messiah***, on **December 8, 2023 at 7:30pm at The Orpheum.**

EMV's in-house orchestra, the **Pacific Baroque Orchestra (PBO)**, and the **Vancouver Chamber Choir** will come together to delight audiences in this glorious masterwork, led by celebrated **conductor Alexander Weimann**. They are joined by four internationally acclaimed soloists: **soprano Sherezade Panthaki, alto Allyson McHardy, tenor Nicholas Scott, and bass Jonathon Adams** - each of whom will perform from memory, thereby enhancing the story-telling side of this glorious work.

"We're thrilled to co-present Handel's *Messiah* with the Vancouver Chamber Choir in one of Vancouver's most celebrated concert halls," says EMV's Artistic & Executive Director Suzie LeBlanc. "Beyond its exquisite composition, Handel's *Messiah* is a beloved holiday tradition revered around the world for its unique ability to transcend boundaries of faith, religion, and language. It speaks to the heart of seasonal proclamations of goodwill towards others and peace on earth – something our world is in desperate need of currently."

EMV and the Vancouver Chamber Choir's rendition of Handel's *Messiah* offers an intimate, baroque styling of the seasonal favourite, reminiscent of the period instruments and display of virtuosity with which Handel would have been acquainted. Featuring an orchestra of 21 period instrumentalists, a chorus of 24 chamber vocalists, and four international soloists specializing in baroque ornamentation performance practice, audiences will be transported to the concert halls of 18th century England, further illuminating the transcendent legacy of this universal treasure.

"Handel's *Messiah* is a beautifully balanced work - the orchestra, soloists and choir all have their moments in the sun. Besides the iconic 'Hallelujah' chorus, the *Messiah* contains a great many catchy, foot tap and smile inducing choruses in addition to the more sombre, stately choruses. Handel knew how to write for voices and singing this work is a great delight," says Kari Turunen, Artistic Director of the Vancouver Chamber Choir, who will be joining in to sing in the tenor section of the Chamber Choir in this production.

Written by the composer in just 24 days, Handel's *Messiah* has been performed around the world for centuries. In Canada alone, *Messiah* performances date back to St. Paul's Anglican Church in Halifax in 1789 – evidence of the timeless resonance of this work! The triumphant “Hallelujah Chorus” is so recognizable and beloved, it is now synonymous with this work, and with the season at large.

The unique narrative of *Messiah* is a universal exploration of the sacredness and fragility of the human experience, as depicted by the life and legacy of Christ” adds LeBlanc. “With each restaging of the masterpiece, there are new revelations for the audience – a gift that serves as the perfect preparation for the warmth and reflection of the season.”

For tickets and information, visit earlymusic.bc.ca

About Early Music Vancouver (earlymusic.bc.ca)

Early Music Vancouver's concerts offer a platform for cross-cultural dialogue and exploration of diverse perspectives and relationships with the past. Under the leadership of Artistic/Executive Director, and internationally acclaimed soprano, Suzie LeBlanc, C.M., EMV presents a variety of live performances and digital concerts featuring some of the most renowned artists in the early music genre drawn from all parts of the globe.

Established in 1990, Pacific Baroque Orchestra (PBO) is 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. EMV fully integrated the Pacific Baroque Orchestra (PBO) into the organization in 2016-2017 under the leadership of keyboardist and conductor Alexander Weimann.

About the Vancouver Chamber Choir (vancouverchamberchoir.com)

For over 50 years, the Vancouver Chamber Choir has been thrilling audiences across Canada and around the world with exceptional live performances and recordings. A flagship choral organization ranking with a handful of North America's best professional choruses, the choir has been a leading contributor to the choral landscape in education and outreach, commissions and premieres, choral professionalism and artistic excellence in the choral arts.

Artistic Director Kari Turunen began leading the Vancouver Chamber Choir in September 2019, its 49th concert season. Since its formation in 1971 by Founder and Conductor Emeritus Jon Washburn, the choir has produced almost 40 studio recordings and is included on a dozen more compilations, two of which have been nominated for JUNO awards. Honoured with the Margaret Hillis Award for Choral Excellence by Chorus America, the choir has performed countless concerts and broadcasts across Europe, Asia and North America.

LISTING INFORMATION

EMV and VCC present Handel's *Messiah*

Date:

December 8, 2023 at 7:30pm

Address:

The Orpheum
601 Smithe St, Vancouver BC

Ticket Prices: From \$20-\$69
Under age 35: 35% off regular priced tickets
Free tickets for Indigenous persons
\$10 Student Rush tickets at the door, based on availability

Ticket Link: earlymusic.bc.ca

Website: earlymusic.bc.ca
vancouverchamberchoir.com

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