



Suzie LeBlanc, C.M.  
Artistic & Executive Director

**November 8, 2023**

**For Immediate Release**

## **The Queen of Carthage Reimagined For Our Era**

(Vancouver, B.C.) – New filmed performance from Early Music Vancouver and re:Naissance Opera remixes a timeless operatic myth with contemporary dance and an empowered heroine.



A projection by Italy-born NYC-based projection designer Camilla Tassi for *The Queen of Carthage*

**Early Music Vancouver (EMV)** and **re:Naissance Opera** have reimagined the story of Dido for our era and proudly present a bold, multidisciplinary filmed performance of a classic operatic myth. **The Queen of Carthage** will be available to view online—pay what you can—to audiences across Canada and around the world from November 16, 2023 to January 5, 2024.

Trailer: [The Queen of Carthage \(Official Trailer\) | EMV & re:Naissance Opera](#)

The ground-breaking, inspiring production of *The Queen of Carthage* was filmed on location in Vancouver by Collide Entertainment in the lead up to the 2023 Early Music Vancouver Summer

Early Music Vancouver  
Hodson Manor, 1254 West 7<sup>th</sup> Avenue, Vancouver, BC V6H 1B6  
[www.earlymusic.bc.ca](http://www.earlymusic.bc.ca) | 604-732-1610



Suzie LeBlanc, C.M.  
Artistic & Executive Director

Festival WOMENinSIGHT, where it drew rave reviews from critics and audiences for its contemporary reframing of the mythic queen Dido story, as she flees tyranny and oppression to found her own city, Carthage.

Dido is portrayed by powerhouse Mexican-born mezzo soprano **Cecilia Duarte** ("A creamy voiced mezzo-soprano," hailed the NYTimes) who delivers a spellbinding performance that serves as a reclamation of the ancient queen's legacy as a political leader, empire builder and woman of colour—this is a portrait of an empowered Dido for our day.

The ambitious filmed production is co-created by Canadian-American singer, actor and stage-director **Dr. Debi Wong** (re:Naissance) and Canadian soprano and early music specialist **Suzie LeBlanc** (EMV), and deftly combines opera and Baroque music with contemporary song, dance as well as stunning projected images.



Juolin Lee, Cecilia Duarte, and Marisa Gold in *The Queen of Carthage* (Jess MacAleese)

“Creating *The Queen of Carthage* has been a journey of rediscovering Dido, not as the tragic figure, as she has so often been depicted in Western European Art, but as a powerful leader who shaped Western Civilizations and history,” said Dr. Debi Wong.

Early Music Vancouver  
Hodson Manor, 1254 West 7<sup>th</sup> Avenue, Vancouver, BC V6H 1B6  
[www.earlymusic.bc.ca](http://www.earlymusic.bc.ca) | 604-732-1610



Suzie LeBlanc, C.M.  
Artistic & Executive Director

“This production is timely, relevant, and brave. We can’t wait to share it with audiences across Canada and beyond. Our passionate creative team and artists inspired us to capture the performance on film so viewers anywhere in the world could experience this unique and powerful story,” said Suzie LeBlanc.

The updated musical performance features newly commissioned works by contemporary composers Jessica McMann, Robyn Jacob and Afarin Mansouri, along with those of Baroque composers Henry Purcell and John Dowland, placing Dido’s story through a prism, as a multifaceted leader, lover and outcast.

The group of artists onstage and behind the scenes is made up almost entirely of women, including stage director Stephanie Wong and Chilean-born, Italy-based music director Catalina Vicens. Dancers Marisa Gold (who serves as choreographer) and Juolin Lee amplify and enliven the power and depth of the music, animating Dido’s epic journey.

The music is played on instruments that were popular in 17th century opera, a signature of Early Music Vancouver’s skilled musicians. Under the expressive direction of Catalina Vicens, the players interweave contemporary songs with elegantly performed Renaissance and Baroque works.

The Queen of Carthage premiered at the Early Music Vancouver Summer Festival earlier this year, stunning audiences and critics. “I’m so moved... cried to witness your brilliance, and was humbly blown away! Just plain thank you for everybody’s talent,” stated Jill Bodkin.

“This stunning new multi-media opera... [is a] a hauntingly beautiful and powerful retelling of Dido’s story,” said Lori Walters, of the Centre for Medieval Studies, University of Toronto

“At the centre of it all was exquisite Mexican mezzo-soprano Cecilia Duarte as the queen, a deeply expressive singer who built to gorgeous crescendos in Purcell’s “Dido’s Lament,” raved award-winning arts journalist Janet Smith, in Stir Magazine.

“We totally need more of these creative projects! Updating the story of an ancient queen to reflect our times is an ambitious goal, but the Queen of Carthage pulls it off with elegance and power. Cecilia Duarte and the creative team deliver an inspiring contemporary take on an old myth, as you’ll see when you check out the film! Enjoy.” – Joel Ivany, artistic director, Edmonton Opera, co-director, Against the Grain’s Messiah / Complex



Suzie LeBlanc, C.M.  
Artistic & Executive Director

To learn more about The Queen of Carthage and view the filmed performance upon launch on **November 16, 2023**, please visit: [earlymusic.bc.ca](http://earlymusic.bc.ca)

**About Early Music Vancouver ([earlymusic.bc.ca](http://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.

**About re:Naissance Opera ([reopera.ca](http://reopera.ca))**

Founded in 2017 by interdisciplinary performance artist Debi Wong, re:Naissance Opera is a bold company exploring new and innovative ways to engage local talent and excite audiences through the expression of opera and music. With its roots firmly planted in telling stories that have been excluded from the opera world, re:Naissance looks to the future with optimism and inclusivity—collectively rebuilding the present and future of opera, one innovation at a time.

For more information, interview requests or photos of The Queen of Carthage  
please contact:

Adele Marsland  
Marketing and Communications Coordinator  
Early Music Vancouver  
[adele@earlymusic.bc.ca](mailto:adele@earlymusic.bc.ca)

Joshua Knelman  
Communications  
Artful Strategies  
[jknelman@artfulstrategies.ca](mailto:jknelman@artfulstrategies.ca)