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What Happens When Opera Meets Hackers?

Re:Naissance Opera set to find out when old world and new collide in innovative #IndieFest hackathon

VANCOUVER, B.C. (October 21, 2021) – As part of this year’s #IndieFest, a local festival created to celebrate established and rising artists in the operatic sector, comes a brand new twist on opera: Modern technological tools will be employed to “hack” a 400-year-old art form and deliver entirely new experiences. Billed as [Canada’s first opera hackathon](#), the event will involve ten indie-gamers and tech people, plus ten indie theatre and opera artists, who will have four days to come up with wild ideas to combine modern tech and art. Their goal will be to innovate digital content while streamlining production for cost effectiveness. This new offering will be one to watch; it could shape the future of performance, expanding the ways that traditional opera and theatre can be enjoyed and created in our modern world.

While each year of IndieFest has included numerous performances, screenings, and conversations, this year’s take on the traditional opera experience also involves Virtual Reality, CGI livestreams and Interactive Motion Capture performances in celebration of opera’s historical roots and the booming creative tech sector in BC. Scheduled are [Eurydice: Live From The Underworld](#), an interactive livestream performance, using computer-generated sets and mythological avatars that are played by live opera singers, where audiences determine the outcome of the show. For early-career artists, re:Naissance Opera and The Cultch offer a hands-on workshop for building worlds and performances in Virtual Reality. IndieFest closes with a celebration of all things art + technology with an industry-wide pitch session: [New Ideas, New Tech](#).

[re:Naissance Opera’s](#) own Debi Wong explains that “Western opera was invented because people from different disciplines came together to reimagine theatre. They leveraged the best of all the art forms and the best of modern technology.”

But that was over 400 years ago. “It’s time for an update,” she says.

Neelesh Nair, Hackathon Mentor and Director of Online Production at re:Naissance Opera, agrees that things have come a long way and that technologies, especially video games, are a pervasive part of our modern culture.

“Games these days are accessible on a vast selection of platforms and cover a broad range of genres and topics. The democratization of game development engines like Unity and Unreal Engine has fueled the rise of independent game developers. These passionate folks are now using game engines to create artistic, innovative and interactive media of all types. It is exciting to see how these creators can help to shape the future of opera.”

#IndieFest 2021 runs from October 28 through November 7; the full event schedule can be found at indiefest.ca.

About re:Naissance Opera

re:Naissance Opera is a Vancouver-based indie company dedicated to changing the world one opera at a time. Producing modern-day operatic performances that represent and connect the diverse communities, people, storytelling media and voices unique to our home city of Vancouver, B.C., we are committed to and advocate for equity, diversity, social and artistic innovation, artistic excellence, interdisciplinary art-making, risk-taking, and cross-sector collaboration. re:Naissance Opera operates on the stolen ancestral and traditional lands of the x^wməθk^wəyəm (Musqueam), Sk̓wx̓wú7mesh Úxwumixw (Squamish), and səliłwətaʔ (Tsleil-Waututh) Nations. Instagram: @opera_reborn

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