

VAN DIEMEN'S BAND

WHERE EVERYTHING IS MUSIC

WITH SPECIAL GUESTS: ENSEMBLE KABOUL

THEATRE ROYAL NIPALUNA/HOBART
FRIDAY 3 OCTOBER

PRESENTED BY THEATRE ROYAL
& VAN DIEMEN'S BAND

Van Diemen's Band acknowledges with deep respect the Traditional Custodians of the land Lutruwita (Tasmania) on which we have the privilege to make music.

ARTISTS

ENSEMBLE KABOUL

KHALED ARMAN RUBAB

SIAR HASHIMI VOCALS/TABLA/PERCUSSION

MASUD HASHIMI ZERBAGHALI/PERCUSSION

VAN DIEMEN'S BAND

JULIA FREDERSDORFF

ARTISTIC DIRECTOR/BAROQUE VIOLIN

LUKE PLUMB MANDOLIN

RACHEL MEYERS VIOLA

LAURA VAUGHAN VIOLA DA GAMBA/VIOLONE

MARTIN PENICKA VIOLONCELLO

DONALD NICOLSON HARPSICHORD

PROGRAM

NAYNAWAZ (1935–1979)

AY NAYNAWÂ
(arr. Khaled Arman, 2022)

TRADITIONAL LADINO

YO M'ENAMORI D'UN AIRE
(arr. Rachel Meyers, 2023)

LUKE PLUMB (b.1980)

MORE THAN MEMORY (2009)

ERIK SATIE (1866–1925)

GNOSSIENNE NO. 1
(arr. Donald Nicolson, 2023)

IMPROVISATION for Rubab, Tablā and Percussion including

YA RASSUL ALLAH
(Trad.)

SHAH WALI TARANASAZ (1927-2007)

BA TU DEL DÂDAM
(arr. Khaled Arman, 2022)

HILDEGARD VON BINGEN (c. 1098–1179)

O VIRTUS SAPENTIE
(arr. Donald Nicolson, 2021)

ANTOINE BOËSSET (1586–1643)

NOS ESPRITS LIBRES
(arr. Donald Nicolson, 2023)

TRAD. / JOHANN SEBASTIAN BACH (1685–1750)

NAGHMA-E KABOULI
(arr. Khaled Arman, 2022)

NAYNAWAZ (1935–1979)

DAR DÂMAN-E SAHARÂ
(arr. Khaled Arman, 2022)

DURATION

Where Everything is Music runs for approximately 70 minutes with no interval.

ABOUT THE PROGRAM

‘Where everything is music...’ (Rumi, 13th century)

Van Diemen’s Band’s latest project – created for MONA FOMA 2023 and now touring nationally in 2025 – is a cross-cultural collaboration with members of the legendary Ensemble Kaboul. Theirs is a practice of both advocacy and preservation, using performance to keep alive a musical culture that Afghanistan’s current regime is attempting to extinguish.

What emerged during the initial collaboration was a stunning composite of two distinct musical worlds, mixing the caramel sounds of VDB’s gut strings with traditional Eastern instruments, and the melismas of Afghan singing with the quixotic late nineteenth-century piano music of Erik Satie. Persian music has been arranged and developed for this unusual (but entirely harmonious) combination, and Western music has been chosen for its fluid and indistinct style, providing a vehicle to unite the oriental sound world with occidental traditions.

Khaled Arman has made the arrangements of the Afghan songs in the program. Composer and singer Fazel Ahmad Zekrya, also known as ‘Naynawaz’ (“The Reed Player”) wrote **Ay naynawâ** fifty years ago to a poem by the famous Sufi mystic known as ‘Rumi’. It describes the ney’s (or reed-flute’s) longing to return to its reed bed as an analogous reference to the pain of separation from one’s native realm and the maturation of a human being.

Ba tu del Dâdam is a popular love song that Afghans sing during festivals; in what will become a typical cross-generic gesture in this program, Khaled’s version makes a detour towards seventeenth-century French music in the middle of the piece. He does the same in his arrangement of the late twentieth-century Persian instrumental melody **Naghma-e Kabouli**, whose Shur

(Phrygian) modal setting invites a juxtaposition with one of the gavottes from J.S. Bach’s Third Suite for lute.

The legendary Naynawaz (who was assassinated in 1979 by the occupying Soviet forces in Afghanistan) also supplies the final song, again in a Khaled arrangement. **Dar dâman-e saharâ** depicts the mystic wandering in the desert, unaware of the world and whispering the ‘song of existence’:

*One who is not attached to earthly things
likes the song of love and spiritual love.*

VDB harpsichordist and musicologist Donald Nicolson bends the West towards the East in his arrangements that exploit the capabilities of Ensemble Kaboul’s master musicians, especially improvisation. The melodic line of Erik Satie’s **Gnossienne No 1**, first published in 1893, suggests to Nicolson “...the sounds of the mystical East” and serves as the starting point for a vocal reimagining by Siar. By contrast, the voices of Hildegard of Bingen’s medieval nuns are removed from her plainchant **O Virtus Sapientie**, and its formerly free line nailed down by driving Eastern rhythms in a purely instrumental rendition coloured by ornamental devices from Byzantine and Turkish music, creating a hypnotic effect.

Like many seventeenth-century French writers, Antoine Boesset (1586-1643) was drawn to timelessness and the ephemeral nature of existence. In the song **Nos esprits libres** (Our free spirits), Nicolson liberates the lilting eight-bar chordal progression from the original text and allows a blurring between the sounds of an early Baroque lute consort and a certain eccentric Frenchman who we’ve already heard, courtesy of improvisation.

VDB violist Rachel Meyers draws on both her Jewish heritage and her musicological research into Renaissance music in an arrangement of the ancient Ladino song **Yo m'enamori d'un aire**. The lyrics sing of falling in love with a beautiful woman, and its melody has crossed many areas of the Mediterranean basin, making it a perfect fit for the diverse instruments in the ensemble.

Mandolinist and composer Luke Plumb, whose musical CV embraces classical, traditional folk and a long stint with famed Scottish band Shooglenifty, contributes his original composition **More than Memory** to the program. He writes:

*'More than Memory is from **The Ten Titles Project** (2009) – ten titles to serve as inspiration for creative expression in any*

field, taken from shared human experience. More than Memory combines nostalgia for childhood innocence, recollections that become jumbled and disjointed over time and the acknowledgment of formative moments in character building.'

Finally, our esteemed Afghan guests needed a chance to return exclusively to their patch in an improvisational conversation between Siar's tablā, Masud's zerbaghali and Khaled's rubab that takes as its starting point a popular melody called **Ya rassul allah**. Unlike the soloistic basis of improvisation in Western jazz, the Afghan version is based on a three-way exchange that rapidly escalates in intensity and dexterity.

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RUMI

WHERE EVERYTHING IS MUSIC

Don't worry about saving these songs!
And if one of our instruments breaks,
it doesn't matter.

We have fallen into the place
where everything is music.

The strumming and the flute notes
rise into the atmosphere,
and even if the whole world's harp
should burn up, there will still be
hidden instruments playing.

So the candle flickers and goes out.
We have a piece of flint, and a spark.

This singing art is sea foam.
The graceful movements come from a pearl
somewhere on the ocean floor.

Poems reach up like spindrift and the edge
of driftwood along the beach, wanting!

They derive
from a slow and powerful root
that we can't see.

Stop the words now.
Open the window in the center of your
chest,
and let the spirit fly in and out.

Translation: Coleman Barks

LYRICS

AY NAYNAWÂ

Lyrics: Maulana Jalal-Al din Bakhi

Listen to this reed how it complains,
It tells the tale of separations and pains.

Since from the reed-bed they cut me free,
Men and women have lamented through me.

I long for a heart torn piece by piece from
separation,
So that I may explain the pain of desire and
aspiration.

Whoever remains distant from their own origin,
Seeks again the time of reunion with it.

In every gathering I became sorrowful,
I joined both the sorrowful and the joyful.

Everyone became my companion according to their
own understanding,
Yet none sought the secrets hidden within me.

My secret is not far from my wail,
But eyes and ears lack the light to perceive it.

The body is not hidden from the soul, nor the soul
from the body,
Yet no one has the vision of the soul granted.

This sound of the reed is fire, not mere wind,
Whoever lacks this fire, let them vanish.

YO M'ENAMORI D'UN AIRE

Lyrics: Traditional Ladino

*Yo me enamoré de un ayre;
de un ayre de una mujer.*

*De una mujer muy hermoza
linda de mi corazón.*

*Yo me enamoré de noche,
y la luna me engañó.*

*Si otra vez yo me enamoro,
sea de día y con sol.*

I fell in love with a breeze;
A breeze of a woman.

Of a woman so beautiful,
Dear one of my heart.

I fell in love at night,
And the moon deceived me.

If I fall in love again
It would be by the sunlight of day.

BA TU DEL DÂDAM

Being With You Was a Mistake

Being with you — a choice I regret,
A love I never should've met.

Your love grew in me, day by day,
With vows and promises you'd gently say.

I came to know you, dearest one, so true,
Yet you were never the one I thought I knew.

You sang to me a melody of peace,
With words of love that brought sweet release.

But now you've broken every vow and line—
You were never worthy of this heart of mine.

DAR DÂMAN-E SAHARÂ

In the embrace of the desert, unaware of the
world,
I heard the melody of existence calling. [OBJ]

He whose heart is not bound by the patterns of
time,
Finds the tune of love and the breeze of the
heart's desire.

This celestial tune, whom shall I tell if you do not
know,
The secret of eternal love. [OBJ]

In the embrace of the desert, unaware of the
world,
I heard the melody of existence calling.

From your innocence, I am drowned in sin,
Thirsting for your pain, I seek the melody of
existence.

He whose heart is not bound by the patterns of
time,
Finds the tune of love and the breeze of the
heart's desire. [OBJ]

This celestial tune, whom shall I tell if you do not
know,
The secret of eternal love.

ABOUT THE ARTISTS

ENSEMBLE KABOUL

Ensemble Kaboul explores the Persian music of Afghanistan, an unrecognised or even forgotten repertoire. Rich with several musical cultures, the traditional and sacred Persian heritage testifies to a remote past and of a particular poetry, which influenced cultures from Lahore to Budapest and from Erevan to Cordoba.

To bring this repertoire back to life, Ensemble Kaboul work like archeologists in order to rediscover the buried musical themes, the missing ornaments and the lost motifs of a formerly flourishing musical corpus, gathering musicians who belong to a large Persian musical family spread over numerous countries.

KHALED ARMAN is one of the most famous players of Afghan lute, the rubab. He introduced the instrument to the Persian, Indian and European music traditions when it was strictly associated with the folk repertoire. He has collaborated with Jordi Savall and Vittorio Gielmi, performed with the Grand Eustache Orchestra in Lausanne and with the Quatuor Barbaroque in France. He writes new compositions and orchestrations for Ensemble Kaboul, and fights for the survival of this instrument in his country.

SIAR HASHIMI (tabla, voice) started learning the tabla in Kabul at the age of 4, and trained in India and Germany with masters Zakir Hussain, Anindo Chatterjee and Kumar Bose. He began working at a young age with Afghan immigrant artists Farhad Darya, Ustad Mahwash, Amad Wali as well as several big names in Indian classical music such as Hariprasad Chaurasia.

MASUD HASHIMI (zerbaghali, percussion) began his musical journey at the age of three, going on to study percussion under renowned European and Afghan instructors. Today, he is a well-known figure within the modern Afghan community in Europe and the United States.

VAN DIEMEN'S BAND

Based in the wild and unspoiled island state of Lutruwita/ Tasmania at the southernmost tip of Australia, 'Australia's Baroque supergroup' Van Diemen's Band breathes new life into historically-informed performance, delivering extraordinary performances across Lutruwita/Tasmania and beyond.

VDB is made up of some of the country's most highly respected early music specialists, who between them have worked with leading ensembles such as Les Arts Florissants, Les Talens Lyriques, Orchestre des Champs-Élysées, The English Concert, Academy of Ancient Music, Le Parlement de Musique and Amsterdam Baroque Orchestra.

Founded in 2016 by violinist Julia Fredersdorff, VDB varies in size from an intimate chamber group to a larger orchestra, exploring the creativity and expressiveness of the baroque while deferring to historical sources on style and instrumentation.

VDB has performed for Ten Days on the Island, Dark Mofo and Mona Foma, toured nationally for Musica Viva Australia and internationally for Chamber Music New Zealand, and has recorded for ABC Classic and the prestigious Swedish label BIS. In 2025 they launched their artist-led recording label - VDB - with *Bohemia*; future releases include *Where Everything is Music* and *Van Diemen's Fiddles*.

VDB is also an active concert presenter in Lutruwita/Tasmania, presenting Lunchbox Concerts in Nipaluna/Hobart, Pataway/Burnie and Launceston, and delivers a range of education and community engagement programs each year.

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LUKE PLUMB

RENEE MILLARD / TRAVEL MANAGERS

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