

VAN DIEMEN'S BAND

WHISPERING
WALLS

12-17 MAY 2023

WYNYARD | QUEENSTOWN | ROSNY PARK
AUSTRALIAN DIGITAL CONCERT HALL

PRESENTED BY
VAN DIEMEN'S BAND

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY

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

VAN DIEMEN'S FIDDLES

JULIA FREDERSDORFF BAROQUE VIOLIN

RACHEL MEYERS OCTAVE VIOLIN & VIOLA

EMILY SHEPPARD VIOLIN, VIOLA & EEL ERHU

CALEB MILLER AUDIO-VISUAL DESIGN & PRODUCTION

ABOUT WHISPERING WALLS

If the walls could talk, what would they tell us?

On an island, the 'walls' are the coastline that makes up its edge. And on *this* island, they enclose a unique web of stories and experiences woven in one of the most ancient inhabited landscapes on the planet.

Our surroundings whisper their secrets to us if we care to listen.

Whispering Walls is a celebration of the Tasmanian landscape and how it has shaped the people who live here.

Van Diemen's Fiddles have curated a program drawn from traditional music from 19th century Tasmanian songbooks, original compositions inspired by Tasmanian rivers, mountains and caves, and the community networks embedded within.

Accompanied by spectacular visual projections by Caleb Miller and poetry readings by Tasmanian poets Daniel Townsend, Adrienne Eberhardt and Jim Everett-puralia meenamatta.

PROGRAM

Poem 'The Voice of Water' by Adrienne Eberhard

RACHEL MEYERS
(b. 1981)

The Voice of Water

EMILY SHEPPARD
(b. 1993)

Windtides: 1. Foam

Poem 'Cockle Creek' by Adrienne Eberhard
Windtides: 2. Storm

E. SHEPPARD

Moonmilk

Poem 'Kunanyi' by Dan Townsend

DAVE MCNAMARA arr. R.MEYERS
(b. 1981)

Nipaluna Sky

ALEXANDER LAING arr. R.MEYERS
(1791-1868)

Medley featuring:
Gordon Street, Sorell
Mrs Clarke Honolulu

Poem 'Blood Lust' by Uncle Jim Everett-puralia meenamatta

TRADITIONAL arr. D NICOLSON

Amazing Grace

Poem 'Sunday Mornings' by Daniel Townsend

E. SHEPPARD

Aftermath

Poem 'Wild Colonial' by Dan Townsend

E. SHEPPARD

Alluvial

TERI YOUNG (b. 1991) arr. VAN DIEMEN'S FIDDLES

Prayer

DURATION

THIS IS A 60 MINUTE PERFORMANCE WITH NO INTERVAL

ABOUT THE PROGRAM

THE VOICE OF WATER (2021)

Rachel Meyers: The Voice of Water was named after a poem written by the Tasmanian poet, Adrienne Eberhard, and a painting by Tasmanian artist Sue Lovegrove in the publication of the same name.

I was struck by the way Adrienne used words and sounds to represent the movement of water. The melody was written to have the naivety of a lullaby - in it, I hoped to capture some of the ways that light moves across the surface of freshwater tarns.

As the piece progresses, the ostinato and rhythmic interplay between the lower violin parts darkens the otherwise smooth surface of the work before receding entirely as the piece returns to the original simplicity of the opening.

This piece was written specially for Van Diemen's Fiddles in 2021.

WINDTIDES (2020)

Emily Sheppard: This piece is inspired by a mid-winter hike along the beginnings of the South Coast Track, into South Cape Rivulet. This track follows the southernmost points of Tasmania, giving a visceral sense of being at the end of the world.

The two movements capture the range of landscapes encountered along the way. The first movement - foam - is reminiscent of the South Cape Rivulet itself, an incredibly expansive sandy beach in all directions. A relaxing and peaceful place to rest after a long day's hike. The second movement - storm dance - represents some of the rougher oceans along the way. There is a place where keen surfers stash surfboards and trek for several hours to catch waves.

WindTides was commissioned by Beaker St and released on their Sci Art Walks podcast with commentary from First Dog on the Moon.

MOONMILK (2017)

Moonmilk is a soft milky substance on cave walls; originally thought to be beamed direct from the moon. We now know moonmilk is an intimate symbiosis between cave crystals and a micro-organism; resilience in collaboration.

This piece was written during a month-long Arts Tasmania Wilderness residency at Hastings and Marakoopa Caves.

NIPALUNA SKY (2020)

Rachel Meyers: Nipaluna Sky was written by Tasmanian musician Dave McNamara and won that year's Folk Federation of Tasmania tune competition.

One morning in autumn, he was left in awe by the sight of the mountain sky between our home on kunanyi/Mt Wellington and the nearby nipaluna/Hobart.

He writes:

Nipaluna sky. When I wake in the morning
river shimmers. Mist shrouds it all the way.
Golden glow of sun, warming up the dawn in
Hobart town. It's the break of day.

Come and we'll walk up on the mountain. Where waratahs grow and
eagles fly. When the cool air and cold rain blow in,
hide where it's warm and dry.
Covered by cloud. Nipaluna sky.

Dave originally wrote this to be played on accordion and violin by our duo, Meyers & McNamara, and I later arranged this for Van Diemen's Fiddles to play as part of the Whispering Walls program.

GORDON STREET, SORELL / MRS CLARKE HONOLULU

Alexander Laing was a Scottish soldier, who came to Tasmania as a convict, eventually serving as a prominent Tasmanian police constable following his release. Importantly, he was also a fiddler and composer and stayed active in the musical life of the colony.

In 2011, Tasmanian historian Peter MacFie uncovered a rare manuscript dated from 1863 of original and popular handwritten tunes for fiddle in the Tasmanian State Archives, and together with folklorists Steve and Marjorie Gadd published a modern edition. Gordon Street, Sorell was named after the Tasmanian place of the same name.

AMAZING GRACE

In our searches around the island for what might have been the most popular hymn throughout the last two centuries, we found that Amazing Grace kept appearing in various different forms ie. sheet music, piano rolls, records etc.

Here in Donald Nicolson's arrangement, the idea of a 'vintage' hymn is explored further with a musical imitation of a gramophone. Nicolson has employed many different musical sound effects such as the imitation of the mechanical hum of the Gramophone, or the spin speed alterations affecting the pitch of the music, or the needle jumping causing musical 'hiccups'.

In the context of this program, we also feel that this piece serves as a moment for us to reflect upon the idea of discord and displacement in the context of colonisation, and working together to find a harmonious outcome in the spirit of reconciliation.

AFTERMATH (2016)

takayna ashes -

*on the sand
two speckled eggs
one cracked open*

*inside
a tiny, wet mass
shivers*

Aftermath was written during time spent in Tasmania's takayna/Tarkine after the 2016 bushfires that burnt large areas of rainforest in the northwest coast. I was walking along a beach at Sarah Anne Rocks, where the vegetation had been thoroughly burnt right up to the coast.

Amongst the blackness, I saw two speckled eggs on the sand. As I pondered the vulnerability of these tiny, exposed eggs, one of them hatched right before my eyes, revealing a shivering baby hooded plover. It was in this place between devastated landscape and fragile new life that I wrote this piece. Dedicated to the fire-fighters, many volunteer, who risk their lives to fight these increasingly frequent and large bushfires.

Aftermath is written for viola and voice to be performed by one person. It features scordatura viola, retuned to B, G, D, F#.

ALLUVIAL (2021)

Alluvial was written for Van Diemen's Fiddles after spending time in and around St Helen's, talking with members of the community.

It was inspired by one aspect of St Helen's history that came up in conversations; the mining of alluvial tin. In the late 1800s, there were many Chinese immigrants who mined tin in the area, and remnants of their camps can still be found when wandering the hillsides around St Helens.

Alluvial features a homemade instrument which is loosely based on a Chinese erhu. While the erhu uses python skin as the resonating diaphragm, the instrument used in this piece is made from Tasmanian eel-skin.

PRAYER

"Prayer" was written by Tasmanian folk singer Teri Young. Teri writes songs of social commentary and love. She is a singer, guitarist, choir leader and bushdance caller. She has released three albums and won many awards including the prestigious Alistair Hulett award for songwriting at the National Folk Festival.

ABOUT VAN DIEMEN'S FIDDLES

JULIA FREDERSDORFF

Melbourne-born violinist Julia Fredersdorff studied baroque violin with Lucinda Moon at the Victorian College of the Arts, before travelling to the Netherlands to study with Enrico Gatti at The Royal Conservatorium in The Hague. Based in Paris for almost ten years, Julia freelanced with some of the finest European ensembles, such as Les Talens Lyriques, Les Folies Françaises, Le Concert d'Astrée, Le Parlement de Musique, Ensemble Matheus, Il Complesso Barocco, New Dutch Academy, Ensemble Aurora and Bach Concentus.

Now resident again in Australia, Julia is the founder and Artistic Director of the Tasmanian baroque ensemble, Van Diemen's Band. She is a founding member of the chamber ensemble Ironwood, and the twice ARIA-nominated baroque trio, Latitude 37. Julia performs regularly with the Orchestra of the Antipodes and is a core-member of Ludovico's Band.

Julia has participated in CD recordings for Virgin Classics, Deutsche Grammophon, BIS, Accent, Naïve, Erato, Passacaille, Ambronay, ABC Classics, Vexations840 and Tall Poppies.

RACHEL MEYERS

Tasmanian musician, composer and musicologist Rachel Meyers' career spans world, folk, and experimental music genres. As an instrumentalist, Rachel has recorded several albums and toured nationally, performing at festivals around the country including A Festival Called Panama, Dark MOFO, MONA FOMA, National Folk Festival, Cygnet Folk Festival, Maldon Folk Festival, and more. She has collaborated on original music for her various ensembles over the past two decades, most recently for Meyers & McNamara, an experimental chamber-folk duo.

Rachel has worked in schools as a Teaching Artist with The Songroom and taught instrumental music for over fifteen years. Rachel is currently studying for a PhD in environmental sound art and musicology, and in receipt of a prestigious Research Training Program Scholarship. She is deeply passionate about working with ecological and musicological stories of place and identity, and using art as a tool for real, tangible community change.

EMILY SHEPPARD

Emily Sheppard is a Tasmanian violinist, violist, improviser and composer who is inspired by unconventional and resonant places and spaces, as well as science and the environment. Trained at the Australian National Academy of Music in Melbourne, she is in the Tasmanian Symphony Orchestra and Van Diemen's Band and has collaborated with Paul Kelly, Katie Noonan, DJ Spooky and Michael Kieran Harvey.

Emily spent four weeks in residency in Tasmanian caves in 2017, supported by Arts Tasmania, composing several new works for solo viola/violin that incorporate extended techniques such as alternative tunings, prepared violin and singing while playing. She has curated performances in Hastings Cave, Marakoopa Cave and Mt Wellington/kunanyi observation shelter. Emily has played at festivals all over Australia, including Mona Foma, Dark Mofo, Ten Days on the Island, Darwin Festival, Brisbane Festival, Canberra International Music Festival, Cygnet Folk Festival, Fractangular and A Festival Called Panama.

CALEB MILLER - MAC40MEDIA

Caleb Miller is a Digital Content Producer and Audio Specialist for Hobart-based business Mac40 Music. Caleb provides end to end media production services, from the formulating and designing ideas, to the filming and audio recording, editing and post production audio and delivery.

Caleb works on around 100 professional projects per year, a vast catalog of varied distributed outputs. Some of these include mixing, filming or composing for commercial television, others include 5.1 surround mixing for international feature films.

Mac40 Music produces all of the TSO Daily Dose and Friday Night Live video projects, deliverables of video and audio production for Tasmania's Symphony Orchestra. Some of Caleb's clients include MGA Insurance, Youi Insurance, Hobart Airport, Tourism Industry Council Tasmania, Point to Pinnacle, MoBros, GuideDogs Tasmania, Yalumba Wines, South Australian Film Corporation, SBS, Seven and Deloitte.

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