

# VAN DIEMEN'S BAND

## TRANSFORMATIONS

SUN 15 FEB | ST CANICE, SANDY BAY

### 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

**ANDREW O'CONNOR** BASS-BARITONE

#### VAN DIEMEN'S BAND

**JULIA FREDERSDORFF** ARTISTIC DIRECTOR / BAROQUE VIOLIN, PICCOLO VIOLIN

**SIMONE SLATTERY** BAROQUE VIOLIN

**KARINA SCHMITZ** BAROQUE VIOLIN & VIOLA

**KATIE YAP\*** BAROQUE VIOLA

**LAURA VAUGHAN** VIOLA DA GAMBA, VIOLONE

**MATTHEW MANCHESTER** CORNETTO

**NIGEL CROCKER** TENOR SACKBUT

**BRETT PAGE** BASS SACKBUT

**DONALD NICOLSON** HARPSICHORD

**THOMAS WILSON** ORGAN

**MERIEL OWEN\*** TRIPLE HARP

**SIM WALTERS\*** DULCIAN, BAROQUE BASSOON

(\* denotes current VDB Fellows)

### PROGRAM

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JOHANN SCHOP (c.1590-1667)	Pavan à 5 in D minor
HEINRICH SCHÜTZ (1585-1672)	Fili Mi, Absalon SWV 269
BROOKE SHELLEY (b.1975)	Et Versa Est Victoria <i>World premiere</i>
FRANZ TUNDER (1614-1667)	O Jesu Dulcissime
MATTHIAS WECKMANN (c.1616-1674)	Sonata Quinta à 4
DIETERICH BUXTEHUDE (c.1637-1707)	Mein Herz ist Bereit
ALICE CHANCE (b.1994)	Au Nord <i>World premiere</i>
NICOLAUS BRUHNS (1665-1697)	Der Herr Hat Seinen Stuhl

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### BROADCAST

Today's concert is being recorded for future broadcast on ABC Classic



### DURATION

Transformations runs for approx. 75 mins with no interval

## FROM THE ARTISTIC DIRECTOR

*Transformations* was conceived working alongside bass-baritone Andrew O'Connor, as a dialogue between the devotional music of 17th-century Germany and two newly commissioned works that reimagine and recontextualize this rich musical heritage.

At the heart of our program lies a carefully curated selection of works for baritone by 17th Century German composers such as Heinrich Schütz, Franz Tunder, Nicolaus Bruhns, and Dieterich Buxtehude—composers whose music explores profound themes of faith, readiness, and human vulnerability.

We have invited two extraordinary Australian composers to create contemporary responses to this baroque repertoire:

Brooke Shelley's work *Et Versa Est Victoria* takes Schütz's deeply moving *Fili mi, Absalom*—a father's lament for his son—as its point of departure. Shelley's piece begins in close conversation with Schütz before dissolving into entirely new musical territory, embodying the very concept of transformation that gives the program its name.

Alice Chance's *Au Nord* draws on a more philosophical inspiration from one of the program's central works, *Mein Herz ist bereit* (My heart is ready), exploring the tension between preparedness and the unexpected paths life presents and our courage to keep searching for things that may be difficult to attain.

In curating *Transformations*, Andrew and I have shaped the program as a journey through multiple dimensions of change. We move chronologically from the 17th century into the present, whilst the tonal and textural landscape shifts from the introspective gravity of the opening works toward the brighter, more optimistic character of the second half. This gradual transformation in instrumentation and affect creates an overarching arc that mirrors the individual transformations within each commissioned piece—whether textual, musical, or philosophical.

The result is a program that is itself a transformation, offering our audience a meditation on how we inherit, honor, and reimagine the artistic voices of the past.

### BROOKE SHELLEY: ET VERSA EST VICTORIA

I was thrilled to be asked to write a companion piece to a work by Heinrich Schütz. Why? First of all, German baroque music is stunning - especially the vocal music (I'm a little biased). Secondly, writing companion pieces to renaissance/baroque music is an indulgent privilege - learning directly

from the masters themselves - like opening the back cover of a work of art composed hundreds of years ago to see what's inside; rather akin to when I was young and used to pull calculators apart to see how they were made.

Schütz's *Fili mi Absalom* is a setting of a mournful, grieving text from the second book of Samuel (Chapter 18, verse 33). Rather than try to put a positive spin on this, I chose to set text following on in Chapter 19, verse 2: *And the victory that day was turned into mourning unto all the people: for the people heard say that day: The king grieveth for his son.*

In continuing along the grief curve, I tried to make the music wallow in mourning and crying (hence the descending 'flowing tears'), anger and disbelief, finally moving to acceptance via harmonic repetition and a clichéd ending.

Harmonic repetition – a chord pattern, if you like – for me creates a sense of calm. The repetition enables you to know what's coming. The clichéd ending – something I usually try to avoid, if possible – is an attempt to illustrate the fact that we all know how it ends – in death. And hopefully it's a tidy one at that: V-II

### ALICE CHANCE: AU NORD

*Au Nord* is a piece about yearning. When Julia Fredersdorff approached me with the idea to record a new work alongside the Buxtehude cantata *Mein herz ist bereit*, with text from the Psalm meaning 'my heart is ready', it prompted me to reflect on situations where our heart is ready for something and yet, for whatever reason, we don't get it.

In late 2025, I was very fortunate to undertake the All That We Are residency thanks to the Peggy Glanville Hicks Trust. I set aside the week to compose this piece. Unable to resist the beauty and drama of the surrounding landscape, I found I spent a lot more time trudging through the bush than at the studio desk. While walking on paths like the Tangara trail, I could often see the sparkling Pipe Clay Lagoon through the trees. However, as much as I wanted to go there, the paths remained stubbornly parallel. Seeing those aquamarine hues through the scraggly cage of layered tree branches, I found I had been given the perfect parallel for the yearning I wanted to express in the music.

We all follow paths which are perfectly sensible and deemed right by our entourage. Much of the time, following these paths leads to attaining many of our society's indicators of success. We 'head north' in the widely accepted sense. But perhaps there is another north. A truer, more personal one, belonging to an inner compass. Perhaps it's one we'd prefer to ignore, thereby avoiding the risk of heartbreak if we can't get there.

In terms of the lagoon, I did eventually get there and dip my fingers in the cold, crystal water. I relished my time at the edge, watching birds and collecting oyster shells. The scene was all the more beautiful for the many unsuccessful attempts I'd made to get there.

I'd like to extend a huge thank you to Julia and Van Diemen's Band, as well as the inimitable Andrew O'Connor who have been so open to my ideas and the spirit of the work. This is my first time writing for piccolo violin and I can't imagine a better instrument to evoke those hyperreal, luminous glimmers I saw through the trees.

## ABOUT THE ARTISTS ANDREW O'CONNOR

For more than a decade Perth-born Andrew O'Connor has maintained a busy freelance career encompassing opera, the concert platform, vocal chamber music, and the classroom. Praised for his 'remarkable musicianship' (Limelight Magazine) and 'textured, fine-wine bass baritone' (Arts Hub) Andrew appears regularly with many of Australia's finest music organisations.

An established figure on the concert platform, his repertoire spans 12th Century Europe to 21st Century Australia – with noted interpretations of Schütz, Handel and the Passions of J.S. Bach and Arvo Pärt. More at: <https://andrewoconnor.com.au/>

## VAN DIEMEN'S BAND

Founded in 2016 by violinist Julia Fredersdorff, VDB delivers extraordinary performances across Lutruwita/Tasmania and beyond. Varying in size from an intimate chamber group to a larger orchestra, VDB explores the creativity and expressiveness of the Baroque while also performing new works on original instruments.

Always seeking to break new ground, VDB has collaborated with guest artists such as Persian/Afghani musicians Ensemble Kaboul and Tasmanian mandolin player Luke Plumb.

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 prestigious Swedish label BIS. In 2025 the artist-led recording label - VDB - launched with *Bohemia*.

VDB is an active concert presenter in Lutruwita and delivers a range of education and community engagement programs each year including the VDB Fellowship .

## MANAGEMENT TEAM

JULIA FREDERSDORFF ARTISTIC DIRECTOR  
JENNIFER KERR EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR  
DIRK LORENZEN OPERATIONS MANAGER  
KATIE YAP ARTISTIC COORDINATOR  
NATALYA BING EDUCATION & COMMUNITY  
SIMON MARTYN-ELLIS LIBRARIAN & BOOKKEEPING

## ABOUT OUR INSTRUMENTS

Extraordinary music requires extraordinary instrumentalists - and instruments!

Our **harpsichord** was built by Dutch maker Titus Crijnen in Spain in 2022. Built using historically informed techniques, it is a replica of an instrument made in 1624 by the Ruckers family. The interior lid artwork is by Nipaluna/Hobart botanical artist, Deborah Wace, commissioned to reflect the unique flora of the instrument's island home.

Our **Baroque triple harp** was built in 2024 by one of the great makers of historic harps, Rainer Thureau in Germany. Made with rare flamed maple, it is a copy of one featured in a 1619 painting by Zampieri, and therefore bears that artist's name.

Our **Kirschner chamber organ** was made in Germany in 2011 using historical techniques, although an electric blower has replaced hand-pumped bellows for airflow.

All were purchased with the generous support of nearly 200 individual donors - thank you!

The **piccolo violin** (nicknamed "Niccolo") was made by Nipaluna/Hobart luthier Douglas Coghill in 2025 and is on loan to VDB from a generous donor. It is a copy of a 1613 Amati instrument held in the National Music Museum (South Dakota).

## THANK YOU

VDB would like to thank the following people for their generous help with this project:

All Saints South Hobart, Southern Cross Care and Sandy Bay - Taroon Catholic Parish, Martin Penicka - and all of our audiences and supporters.

This project has been made possible with the generous support of:



Van Diemen's Band is supported by Arts Tasmania. Commissioned works by Alice Chance and Brooke Shelley were supported by Create NSW / NSW Government. Alice Chance's work was developed with the kind assistance of the Peggy Glanville-Hicks Trust and All That We Are.

## TEXTS AND TRANSLATIONS

### Fili mi, Absalon

Fili mi, Absalon!  
Quis mihi tribuat  
ut ego moriar pro te.  
Fili mi, Absalon!

My son, Absalom!  
Who would grant  
that I should die in your place?  
My son, Absalom!

### Et Versa Est Victoria

Et versa est victoria  
in luctum in die illa omni populo:  
audivit enim populus in die illa dici:  
Dolet rex super filio suo.

And the victory that day was turned into mourning  
unto all the people:  
for the people heard say that day:  
The king grieveth for his son.

### O Jesu Dulcissime

O Jesu dulcissime, creator generis humani.  
Quod per sacramentum tuum voluisti  
habitare in nobis.  
Conserva cor meum et corpus meum et  
non confundar in aeternum.  
Alleluia

O sweetest Jesus, creator of the human race.  
Which through your sacrament you wish to  
dwell in us.  
Protect my heart and body, let me never be  
confounded.  
Alleluia

### Mein herz ist bereit

Mein Herz ist bereit, Gott, dass ich singe und lobe,  
Wache auf, meine Ehre, wache auf, Psalter und  
Harfe.

My heart is ready, God, that I sing and praise,  
Wake up, my honor, wake up, psaltery and harp.

Frühe will ich aufwachen.  
Herr, ich will dir danken unter den Völkern,  
ich will dir lobsingeln unter Leuten;

I want to wake up early.  
Lord, I want to thank you among the nations  
I will sing your praises among people;

denn deine Güte ist so weit der Himmel ist,  
und deine Wahrheit so weit die Wolken gehen.

because your goodness is as far as heaven is,  
and your truth as far as the clouds go.

Erhebe dich, Gott, über den Himmel und Ehre über  
alle Welt.

Exalt yourself, O God, above heaven and glory  
above all the world.

### Au Nord (Alice Chance)

Le chemin qui mène au nord  
Promet de me combler  
Il s'ouvre sur la verdure  
Et la lumière diffusée

### Toward North (English Translation)

The northbound path  
Promises fulfilment  
It opens onto greenery  
And diffused light

Le regard fixé tout droit  
Permet d'imaginer  
Qu'ici se trouve tout ce dont  
J'ai le droit de rêver

With my eyes fixed straight ahead  
It's easy to imagine  
That this place provides everything  
I'm allowed to dream of

Et pourtant, en me tournant  
Je voie des lueurs bleus, des étincelles  
Au delà des branches, les flots qui dansent  
Une mosaïque vivante, qui m'appelle

And yet, when I turn  
I see blue glimmers and sparkles  
Beyond the branches, dancing tides  
A living mosaic which calls me

Vers l'autre nord  
Celui d'une rose des vents encore naissante  
Mon propre nord  
Celui de la seule boussole qui a du sens

Towards the other north  
The one of a compass rose which is still blossoming  
My own north  
Belonging to the only compass which makes sense

Ces flots me transformeraient  
Mon cœur a beau être prêt  
Le chemin m'emmène  
Ailleurs

Je m'écarte en le visant  
Il suffit de quelques pas  
Des grands portails, des serpents sifflants  
Me font rebrousser chemin

Et pourtant, en me tournant  
Je voie des lueurs bleus, des étincelles  
Au delà des branches, les flots qui dansent  
Une mosaïque vivante, qui m'appelle

Vers l'autre nord  
Celui d'une rose des vents encore naissante  
Mon propre nord  
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Ces flots me transformeraient  
Mon cœur a beau être prêt  
Le chemin m'emmène  
Ailleurs

—Alice Chance

These tides would transform me  
Even though my heart is ready  
The path leads me  
Elsewhere

I divert, heading towards it  
It only takes a few steps  
Before big gates and hissing snakes  
Force me to retrace my path

And yet, when I turn  
I see blue glimmers and sparkles  
Beyond the branches, dancing tides  
A living mosaic which calls me

Towards the other north  
The one of a compass rose which is still blossoming  
My own north  
Belonging to the only compass which makes sense

These tides would transform me  
Even though my heart is ready  
The path leads me  
Elsewhere

### **Der Herr hat seinen Stuhl**

Der Herr hat seinen Stuhl im Himmel bereitet,  
und sein Reich herrscht über alles.

Lobet den Herrn, ihr seine Engel, ihr starken Helden,  
die ihr seinen Befehl ausrichtet,  
daß man höre die Stimme seines Wortes.

Lobet den Herrn, alle seine Heerscharen,  
seine Diener, die ihr seinen Willen tut!

Lobet den Herrn, alle seine Werke, an allen Orten  
seiner Herrschaft!  
Lobe den Herrn, meine Seele!  
Alleluia

The Lord has made ready his high seat in the  
heavens; his kingdom is ruling over all.

Give praise to the Lord, you his angels,  
who are great in strength,  
doing his orders, and waiting for his voice.

Give praise to the Lord, all you his armies; and you  
his servants who do his pleasure!

Give praise to the Lord, all his works, in all places  
under his rule!  
give praise to the Lord, O my soul!  
Alleluia