

VAN DIEMEN'S BAND

CLOAK
& DAGGER

23-28 OCTOBER 2024

LATROBE - MUNATRIK/STANLEY -
NIPALUNA/HOBART - FRANKLIN -
LAUNCESTON

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

LOTTE BETTS-DEAN VOICE
(LATROBE, MUNATRIK/STANLEY, NIPALUNA/HOBART, FRANKLIN)

QUIN THOMSON VOICE
(LAUNCESTON)

VAN DIEMEN'S BAND

JULIA FREDERSDORFF BAROQUE VIOLIN
SIMONE SLATTERY BAROQUE VIOLIN, RECORDER

KATIE YAP VIOLA
LAURA VAUGHAN VIOLA DA GAMBA

MARTIN PENICKA CELLO
DONALD NICOLSON VIRGINALS
MERIEL OWEN ORGAN, HARP

FROM THE ARTISTIC DIRECTOR

Seventeenth-century England and Scotland may seem like a world away, yet when we consider our current era, myriad parallels can be found. Between the execution of Mary Queen of Scots and Charles II's reign some 80 years later, the people of England were subjected to political battles, civil war, extreme poverty, plague, regicide and quasi-dictator-style puritanical rule. It was a century of uncertainty, chaos, fear, xenophobia, torture, mass-death, beheadings, witches being hunted and burned alive, traitors being hung drawn and quartered etc. Yet all of this was motivated by the same antagonists (ie. religious wars, hierarchical greed, corrupt politics, xenophobia, 'false' news, and power) as those we are regularly witnessing in our 21st-century lives.

Cloak & Dagger traverses the many existential transformations music made during those one hundred years, from the Golden Age of Dowland through the dance music of the taverns and propaganda-laden popular tunes of the street, finally emerging out the other side with England's Orpheus Britannicus, Henry Purcell. The instruments we are playing are much the same as those that would have been heard by the likes of Henry Purcell too; instruments equally at home in the streets and the Royal court.

Musicians back then were jacks of all trades. Even if they were employed by the court they were equally at home playing in a tavern, but nevertheless it was a worthy and respected profession that sometimes carried great power and esteem. Imagine then, how it must have felt for them during the Interregnum, when the practice of most forms of music in public settings was banned and their livelihood and sense of purpose declared to be the stuff of 'rogues'. Over the following three decades, this cultural hiatus seriously hampered the development of what (in the early part of the century) had been developing into a unique and distinctive musical style. Many musicians fled the country; those who stayed had to resort to performing in illicit concerts.

But even through this period of prohibition, music stayed alive, playing an important role uniting people in their humanity during dark and deeply troubled times and finally ascending from the underworld with a message of hope and beauty.

PROGRAM

- JOHN DOWLAND (1563-1626) King of Denmark's Galliard
J. DOWLAND arr. D. NICOLSON Can she excuse my wrongs (1597)
- ANTHONY HOLBORNE (1545-1602) Almain *The Choice*
Pavan *The Funerals*
from *Pavans, Galliards, Almains and other short Aeirs, both grave and light,*
in five parts, for Viols, Violins, or other Musically Winde Instruments (1599)
- ANON Have you seen but a whyte lillie grow (Song Text: Ben Johnson)
from *The Devil is an Ass* (1616)
- ANON The First Witches Dance from *The Masque of Queens* (1609)
- HENRY LAWES (1595-1662) Sweet Echo from *Comus* (1634)
- JOHN JENKINS (1592-1678) Newark Seige (1646)
- H. LAWES I Rise and Grieve (c.1645)
- WILLIAM LAWES (?-1645) Pavan
from *Consort to the organ Set a IV in F Major* (1638)
- TRAD. arr. D. NICOLSON (b. 1979) Broadside Ballads (2024*)
A Coffin For King Charles: A Crown For Cromwell: A Pit For The People
+ A New Song (A Trimmer He will be/A Begging We Will Go)
- TRAD. (PLAYFORD) arr. Q. THOMSON (b. 1974) Lady Banbury's Hornpipe
& Cuckolds all in a row (2024*)
- TRAD. arr. D. NICOLSON Oliver Cromwell Lay Buried and Dead (2024*)
- MATTHEW LOCKE (1622-1677) Curtain Tune from *The Tempest* (1667)
- HENRY PURCELL (?-1695) Here the Deities approve
from *Welcome to all the Pleasures* Z. 339 (1690)
Curtain tune from *Timon of Athens* Z. 632 (1695)
Dido's Lament from *Dido and Aeneas* Z. 626 (1688)
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*Commissioned by Van Diemen's Band

DURATION

This program runs for 65 minutes with no interval.

ABOUT THE PROGRAM

Today, we invite you to embark on a captivating journey back in time, to 17th-century England—a period fraught with political turmoil and religious strife. Our performance highlights how music could be both symbolic and subversive. It also illustrates how music served as a lifeline during a time when personal preservation outweighed mere musical preference. England, known across Europe as ‘Devil Land’ during this tumultuous era, grappled with the aftermath of King Charles’s execution, the rise of Puritanism, and fears regarding the perceived threat of social chaos caused by witchcraft and magic. In such an environment, music transcended entertainment; it became a vital means of propaganda, woven intricately into the fabric of daily life, carrying hidden meanings and symbols that resonate even today.

Our program opens with selections from the Golden Age of music, a time when art flourished under the reign of Elizabeth I. Though she was a staunch patron of the arts, her political landscape was as complex as the music itself. Elizabeth relied heavily on intelligence gathered by her spies and diplomats — and her musicians were particularly adept at navigating the intricate politics of the courts. Among them was John Dowland (1563-1626), a celebrated lutenist and composer known for his exquisite melancholic melodies. However, Dowland’s life was marked by mystery and intrigue; and when he served as lutenist to King Christian IV of Denmark he was also rumoured to have engaged in covert activities on behalf of Sir Robert Cecil, a key advisor to both Elizabeth and her successor, James I. As we listen to pieces like “King of Denmark’s Galliard” and “Can She Excuse My Wrongs,” we invite you to reflect not just on the beauty of the music, but also on the fascinating secret life of its creator—a man whose melodies captured the complexities of his era.

Transitioning from the Golden Age, we delve into the world of the Stuart Court Masque, an extravagant spectacle that blended poetry, music, dance, and visual art to reinforce the monarchy’s authority. These performances were more than mere entertainment; they served as a backdrop for political machinations as courtiers vied for royal favour. From 1609 onwards, the antimasque emerged as a satirical prelude, featuring grotesque characters who embodied societal vices, only to be vanquished by the noble figures of the masque. As you listen to “The First Witches Dance,” consider the words of the famous Jacobean playwright Ben Jonson, who vividly described the witches’ dance as an inversion of societal norms:

[witches]...do all things contrary to the custom of men, dancing back to back, and hip to hip, their hands joined, and making their circles backwards, to the left hand, with strange phantastic motions of their heads and bodies.

These extravagant theatrical events highlighted the intricate relationship between societal beliefs, art and politics during this time. The courtly masques not only reflected the lavish lifestyle of the royals but also underscored their detachment from the economic struggles faced by ordinary citizens.

As tensions mounted, the ideological rift between King Charles I and Parliament culminated in the English Civil War in 1642. Charles’s belief in the divine right of kings clashed with Parliament’s push for power redistribution, igniting a conflict that would reshape the nation. This was a time when music took on a new role, serving as a vessel for propaganda in a semi-literate society.

As we listen to John Jenkins's "The Newark Siege," written around 1646, let the evocative melodies transport you to a battlefield, capturing the despair, conflict, and fleeting triumph of war. Jenkins's work exemplifies the art of musical storytelling, blending historical events with emotive compositions.

During this tumultuous time, political factions turned to popular song as a means of communication. Ballads printed on cheap paper conveyed sensationalized narratives, becoming a powerful tool for disseminating propaganda. The first ballad you will hear, "A Coffin For King Charles: A Crown For Cromwell," is explicit in its political critique, while the second subtly references the "trimmer" phenomenon—a term used to describe those who sought a middle ground amidst extreme political ideologies. Lord Halifax, who positioned himself as a neutral figure, became a target for both sides, and the subsequent accusations of treason exemplified the precariousness of political allegiance during the civil strife.

The execution of Charles I in 1649 ushered in the Puritan-led Interregnum, a period marked by significant cultural restrictions. Although many forms of entertainment were suppressed, music remained a vibrant part of social life. John Playford's "English Dancing Master," published shortly after the king's execution, served as a royalist manifesto, filled with dance music that ridiculed Parliament and its followers.

As we present "Cuckolds All A Row" and "Lady Banbury's Hornpipe," consider how these melodies conveyed potent political messages. "Cuckolds All A Row" criticized the Church of England and Parliament, while "Lady Banbury's Hornpipe" recounted the scandal surrounding Elizabeth Howard, a noblewoman whose actions became fodder for political satire.

As our program draws to a close, we reflect on the Restoration of the monarchy in 1660, which marked a renaissance of artistic expression. Under Charles II's patronage, theatres reopened, religious practices were revitalised, and the arts flourished, paving the way for new forms of entertainment, including opera. This period heralded a vibrant cultural revival, showcasing how the arts not only survived but thrived amidst the shifting political landscape.

Yet despite the post-Interregnum thirst for entertainment, themes of fate, mysticism, despair and grief were never far from the surface. As we close the program with some of the most exquisite music from this period, we can hear the legacy of almost 100 years of intrigue, war, and ever-present cloak and dagger machinations of political power mongering.

Throughout this performance, we have traversed the rich tapestry of 17th-century English music, revealing how it intertwined with the social and political currents of the time. Music was not merely a reflection of cultural tastes; it was a medium of survival, propaganda, and political expression. As you listen, allow yourself to be enveloped by the melodies, recognising the complex historical narratives they carry.

We hope that today's journey enriches your understanding and appreciation of music's profound impact on society, and perhaps, changes the way you listen to the sounds around you. Thank you for joining us in this exploration of a turbulent yet fascinating era.

ABOUT THE ARTISTS

VAN DIEMEN'S BAND

Founded in 2016 by violinist Julia Fredersdorff, Van Diemen's Band (VDB) delivers extraordinary performances across lutruwita/Tasmania as well as online. 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 French Baroque specialist Martin Gester, Persian/Afghani musicians Ensemble Kaboul and Tasmanian mandolin player Luke Plumb, and released a music video, Song of the Birds, in 2021.

VDB has performed for Ten Days on the Island, Dark Mofu 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.

VDB is an active concert presenter in lutruwita/Tasmania, presenting Lunchbox Concerts in nipaluna/Hobart and pataway/Burnie, and delivers a range of education and community engagement programs each year.

For more information about VDB and our artists, visit www.vandiemensband.com.au.

LOTTE BETTS-DEAN

Lotte Betts-Dean is an Australian mezzo soprano based in the UK with a wide ranging repertoire and a passion for curation, programming and collaborative project development. Praised for her "irrepressible sense of drama and unmissable, urgent musicality" (The Guardian) and "arrestingly opulent voice" (Gramophone), Lotte is equally at home in chamber music, art song, contemporary repertoire of all kinds, early music, opera and narration.

Lotte is an Associate of the Royal Academy of Music, an Ambassador for Donne UK — an organisation supporting women in music — and recently won Young Artist of the Year at the 2024 Royal Philharmonic Society Awards. Lotte is a regular at major festivals and venues across the UK, Australia and Europe, including Wigmore Hall, Kings Place, Aldeburgh Festival, Oxford Song, West Cork Chamber Music and Australian Festival of Chamber Music, and operatic credits in baroque, 20th century and contemporary opera include Grand Théâtre de Genève, Bayerische Staatsoper, Nevill Holt Festival and State Opera of South Australia. Regular Australian collaborators include Van Diemen's Band, La Compañía, Rubiks Collective, Ensemble Q and MSO.

Lotte studied at Melbourne Conservatorium of Music, ANAM and the Royal Academy of Music. Recent recordings have been released to acclaim on Delphian Records (Stuart MacRae, Arthur Keegan), Another Timbre (Catherine Lamb), NAXOS (Phillippos Tsalahouris), Divine Art Métier (Michael Finnissy) and BIS (Brett Dean), with further albums due for release next year on Platoon (Schubert), Delphian (Britten) and Odradek (Stravinsky).

Lotte is represented worldwide by Askonas Holt and is thrilled to be back in lutruwita/Tasmania with Van Diemen's Band.

QUIN THOMSON

Quin Thomson (they/them) is a multidisciplinary performer/recording artist, composer, musical director, and experimentalist.

As a performer, Quin has appeared with Amsterdam Baroque, Netherlands Bach Society, the Song Company, the TSO, Van Diemen's Band, and many others.

Their compositions have been played by by Van Diemen's Band, Riley Lee, Xyris Quartet, Tasmanian Youth Orchestra, the Text/ure project, Sequenza ensemble, and (as part of the world premiere of their concert-length work *A Tasmanian Requiem*, under the direction of Gary Wain) Island Brass Quintet, among others. Their Electrogurdy project (generously funded by RANT Arts / RAF) is facilitating a broadening of Quin's practice into site-specific, off-grid, improvisational, algorithmic and durational work. Upcoming commissions include further work for the Van Diemen's constellation of ensembles, and for Homophonic!.

Musical Direction credits include QTas Choir (a Tasmania-wide LGBTIQASB+ community vocal ensemble initiative) UTas Conservatorium Vocal Ensemble, Loose Canon Chamber Singers, and Tasmanian Youth Orchestra ensembles, as well as Van Diemen's Band's vocal mentoring ensemble, Van Diemen's Voices.

TOURING TEAM

JULIA FREDERSDORFF ARTISTIC DIRECTOR
JENNIFER KERR EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
KATIE YAP ARTISTIC COORDINATOR, SNACKS CAPTAIN
NATALYA BING EDUCATION & COMMUNITY, FRONT OF HOUSE
DIRK LORENZEN, SAMUEL TAN PRODUCTION

THANKYOU

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Cloak & Dagger has been curated in collaboration with Dr. Chrissie Berryman.

SUPPORTERS

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