

VAN DIEMEN'S BAND

TRANSFORMATIONS

TUE 15 SEP | ST PATRICKS CATHEDRAL, PARRAMATTA

ARTISTS

ANDREW O'CONNOR BASS-BARITONE

VAN DIEMEN'S BAND

JULIA FREDERSDORFF ARTISTIC DIRECTOR / BAROQUE VIOLIN, PICCOLO VIOLIN

SIMONE SLATTERY BAROQUE VIOLIN

JOHN MA BAROQUE VIOLIN & VIOLA

KATIE YAP BAROQUE VIOLA

LAURA VAUGHAN VIOLA DA GAMBA, VIOLONE

NIGEL CROCKER TENOR SACKBUT

BRETT PAGE BASS SACKBUT

SIMON MARTYN-ELLIS THEORBO

ERIN HELYARD HARPSICHORD

THOMAS WILSON ORGAN

PROGRAM

JOHANN SCHOP (c.1590-1667)	Pavan à 5 in D minor
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HEINRICH SCHÜTZ (1585-1672)	Fili Mi, Absalon SWV 269
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BROOKE SHELLEY (b.1975)	Et Versa Est Victoria <i>NSW premiere</i>
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NICOLAUS BRUHNS (1665-1697)	De Profundis Clamavi
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JOHANN PEZEL (1639-1694)	Sonata in D
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FRANZ TUNDER (1614-1667)	O Jesu Dulcissime
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DIETERICH BUXTEHUDE (c.1637-1707)	Mein Herz ist Bereit
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ALICE CHANCE (b.1994)	Au Nord <i>NSW premiere</i>
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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.

CREDITS

Continuo organ by Henk Klop, Garderen, Nederland 2007, courtesy of Cantillation & Pinchgut Opera. Italian Harpsichord by Colin Booth, UK 1999, courtesy of Pinchgut Opera.

Early Keyboards prepared by Carey Beebe.

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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.

De Profundis Clamavi

De profundis clamavi ad te, Domine;
Domine exaudi vocem meam.
Fiant aures tuae intendentes
in vocem deprecationis meae.

From the depths, I have cried out to you, O Lord;
Lord, hear my voice. Let your ears be attentive
to the voice of my supplication.

Si iniquitates observaveris, Domine,
Domine, quis sustinebit?
Quia apud te propitiatio est,
et propter legem tuam, sustinui te, Domine.

If you, Lord, were to mark iniquities, who, O Lord,
shall stand?
For with you is forgiveness; and because of your law,
I stood by you, Lord.

Sustinuit anima mea in verbo eius;
speravit anima mea in Domino.
A custodia matutina usque ad noctem,
speret Israel in Domino.

My soul has stood by his word.
My soul has hoped in the Lord.
From the morning watch, even until night, let Israel
hope in the Lord.

Quia apud Dominum misericordia
et copiosa apud eum redemptio.
Et ipse redimet Israel
ex omnibus iniquitatibus eius.

For with the Lord there is mercy, and with him is
plenteous redemption.
And he will redeem Israel from all his iniquities.

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

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

Et pourtant, en me tournant
Je vois des lueurs bleues, 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
Celui de la seule boussole qui a du sens

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 vois des lueurs bleues, 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
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Ces flots me transformeraient
Mon cœur a beau être prêt
Le chemin m'emmène
Ailleurs

—Alice Chance

Toward North (English Translation)

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

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

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

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

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