

# womadelaide

SOUNDS OF THE PLANET 2008

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## WOMADELAIDE 2008 PREVIEW LINE UP ANNOUNCED TODAY

"As close to heaven as we can hope for in this lifetime." Sydney Morning Herald.

Returning to Adelaide from 7-9 March 2008, WOMADelaide celebrates the planet's rich and diverse cultures over three nights and two spectacular days of music arts and dance. WOMADelaide is one of Australia's most significant arts, cultural and entertainment events and the 2008 festival will see more than 400 artists from 17 countries perform in the city's magical Botanic Park.

The 15<sup>th</sup> anniversary festival in 2007 attracted 78,000 attendances and, with a steady growth in attendances since its inception in 1992, organisers are once again preparing to host record crowds.

Six stages, a Global Village of more than 100 stalls showcasing food, arts and crafts from around the world, the hugely popular KidZone together with a site program that includes visual arts, roving performers, installations, Taste the World and more provide the diversity and broad-based cultural offerings that make the WOMADelaide experience simply unmatched.

Festival Director, Ian Scobie released details of a selection of artists appearing at WOMADelaide 2008 today to coincide with the launch of the Adelaide Bank Festival of Arts program.

"Here we are – 16 years on from the first WOMADelaide in the 1992 Adelaide Festival - with a program as rich in its diversity and scope as any we have produced.

It is a great thrill to be able to bring together the work of esteemed artists like Cesária Évora, the incredible Taraf de Haïdouks and Dr Natesan Ramani – all drawing on ancient traditions of song and music. Equally, to have as a centrepiece the extraordinary landmark production MURUNDAK and its celebration of the Australian Indigenous struggle through music, produced by our colleagues at Melbourne's Arts House, is a real symbol of the maturity of this festival and its broad audience. It also continues an important tradition of WOMAD festivals in their celebration of the journey through the cultures, politics and concerns of artists from across the world.

The engagement of the audiences and artists over these special three days in March in the midst of Australia's biennial international arts festival makes for a specially memorable and important weekend. Don't miss it," he said.

Recognised as the world's leading exponent of Pacific contemporary dance, New Zealand's Black Grace Dance Company fuse traditional styles with modern techniques in an extraordinary and dynamic form. USA's legendary percussionist Billy Cobham returns to WOMADelaide with his Septet and an Australian debut performance of his soon-to-be-released CD.

France's illuminating La Compagnie Carabosse - a major hit of the 2004 and 2005 festivals - offer a world of creation around the theme of fire, lighting up the Park with hundreds of candle pots in wondrous ways.

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From Cape Verde, the extraordinary talents of **Cesária Évora**, one of the world's finest practitioners of *morna* — a traditional style with a sensibility often compared to the blues. Boasting a career spanning more than 20 years, **Cesária Évora** was nominated for a Grammy Award in 1999 and is often referred to as the 'barefoot diva' for her preference for performing without shoes. Last in Australia in 1997, this will be her first visit to Adelaide and WOMADelaide.

The much-loved and admired Indian artist **Dr Natesan Ramani** is the most eminent flute player of modern times in the Carnatic (South Indian) tradition. Likened to "*the first birdcall*" (The Age), he has become a legend in his own life time, honoured by the Indian President with the coveted "Padmashri" award. His simple 12-inch soprano flute is a piece of bamboo with holes in it – nothing fancy - capable of amazing power and beauty. Dr Natesan Ramani was last in Australia for WOMADelaide 2001.

**MURUNDAK: The Black Arm Band** celebrates Indigenous Australia and brings together the country's finest contemporary and traditional musicians including **Archie Roach, Emma Donovan, Kev Carmody, Lou Bennett, Mark Atkins, Paul Kelly, Ruby Hunter** and many more. MURUNDAK, a large-scale work including projections, was originally commissioned by the 2006 Melbourne International Arts Festival and is a call for black-white solidarity.

An exciting inclusion in the line-up is **Sharon Jones and The Dap-Kings** - from Georgia, USA (home of the Godfather of soul, James Brown) – who capture the essence and energy of funk as it was in its heyday in the 1960s and 70s, using analogue recording equipment and playing the vintage instruments of the era.

Described as 'the best gypsy band in the world' (The Independent, UK), the colourful and mischievous **Taraf De Haikdouks** are sure to steal the hearts of WOMADelaide audiences. Originating from a small Romanian village, Taraf De Haidouks are a group of twelve Gypsy *lautari* (traditional musicians) who perform medieval ballads and Turkish-flavoured dance tunes from the Balkans infused with energy.

From the soul of Russia comes the truly phenomenal **Terem Quartet**. Pioneering a new way of playing music on folk instruments, the passionate, lively and thrilling Terem Quartet encompass virtually the entire worldwide repertoire of classical music and have been delighting audiences across the globe for nearly 20 years. The Quartet have represented Russia in front of the planet's most recognised figures including The Pope and Mother Teresa at the Vatican and the G8 leaders at the summit in St Petersburg. They last appeared at WOMADelaide 1997.

France's **Thierry "Titi" Robin** has developed a unique musical style using influences from India and North Africa, his two main styles being Gypsy and Eastern cultures. With a career spanning 20 years, 600 live performances and some 100,000 albums sold, Thierry "Titi" Robin has been labelled one of the finest gypsy musicians in the world.

The full WOMADelaide 2008 program will be launched in January 2008.

For more information visit [www.womadelaide.com.au](http://www.womadelaide.com.au)

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## Artist Information

### **Billy Cobham Septet (USA)**

Drums became a true voice of innovative jazz expression in the hands of Billy Cobham, the Panama-born drummer who in the past 30 years has been an integral collaborator with such musical luminaries as Miles Davis, McCoy Tyner, Horace Silver, Stanley Turrentine, Oscar Peterson, George Benson, Ron Carter and Tito Puente. Audiences were reminded of his instrumental mastery when Cobham performed a riveting 50-minute unaccompanied drum solo at WOMADelaide 2007, and orchestrated inspired improvisations as musical director of the festival's joyous All-Star Gala.

Cobham returns to Adelaide for the Festival of Arts; his new septet joining the Adelaide Symphony Orchestra to revive the music of the Mahavishnu Orchestra – the innovative and highly influential jazz/fusion group that he performed in with guitarist John McLaughlin and keyboardist Jan Hammer from 1970 to 1973. While none of the other original group members will be joining Cobham on this tour, the septet features a galaxy of jazz talent, with Australian-born guitarist Frank Gambale (long-time member of the Chick Corea Elektric Band), American saxophonist Ernie Watts and trombonist Marshall Gilkes, UK trumpeter Guy Barker, Jukkis Uotila from Finland on piano, and Stefan Rademacher from Germany on electric bass. At WOMADelaide, the septet will perform music from Cobham's soon-to-be-released CD.

By arrangement with the Adelaide Bank Festival of Arts

[www.billycobham.com](http://www.billycobham.com)

### **Black Grace (New Zealand)**

**WOMADelaide Exclusive**

Since 1995, Black Grace has cut an imposing figure on the world stage as New Zealand's leading contemporary dance company. The robust athleticism of Neil Ieremia's dynamic troupe that fuses Pacific dance traditions with contemporary movement has won plaudits across North America, Europe and Japan. Ieremia brings to Black Grace an abiding belief in three key Samoan principles, Fa'amaoni (integrity, honesty and pride), Fa'amalosi/Loto Tele (perseverance and determination) and Fa'aloalo (humility and respect). Black Grace will perform extracts from several of its most celebrated works at WOMADelaide 2008, including: *Minoi*, a signature work of Ieremia that premiered in 1999, where movement produces sound through the union of contemporary and Fa'ataupati (Samoan slap dance) traditional dance styles. *Human Language*, premiered within the inaugural Black Grace & Friends season in 2002, which saw the first appearance of female dancers with Black Grace. Witty and surreal, *Human Language* is a dynamic conversation between feminine beauty and masculine strength, featuring a vibrant soundtrack by jazz musician Chico Hamilton and a rendition of the song *Drive*, written by Bic Runga.

*Amata* is an evocative new work that pushes the limits of physicality, passion and grace, choreographed by Ieremia. *Amata*, which translates as "begin" in Samoan, explores our ability to love fearlessly, lose bravely, learn endlessly and ultimately embrace life by accepting change. It features a company of 12 women – the first all-female work presented by Black Grace.

*Fa'a ulutao* is a brief section of Ieremia's larger work *Suttee*, with a six-man troupe expressing the cultural tradition of tattooing and its symbolism as a crucial male rite of passage.

Supported by Creative New Zealand

[www.blackgrace.co.nz](http://www.blackgrace.co.nz)

### **Cesária Évora (Cape Verde)**

Nicknamed the "barefoot diva" for her lifelong habit of performing without shoes, Cesaria Évora is the champion of morna – a raw, emotive folk music related to Portuguese fado and Brazilian modinha. Her rich musicality was nurtured far away from the eyes of the world, in the port township of Mindelo among 10 islands lost off the coast of Senegal that is home to an evocative, passionate music assimilating the sounds of Africa and the Americas with Europe – salsa, samba, quadrille, lundum and fado.

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It was not until she was 47 that Evora recorded her first album, after finally being given an opportunity to travel to France for recording sessions. *La Diva aux pieds nus (The Barefoot Diva)* became a hit in 1988 and launched a stellar international performing career that soon had critics raving: "She belongs to the world nobility of bar singers." Evora, who has now sold over 5 million albums worldwide, has just released her tenth album, *Rogamar*, which features the rousing morna, coladera and saudade compositions of extraordinary songwriters from Mindelo. They tell Evora's life story in plaintive tones, evident on *Um Pincelada*, written by Teofilo Chantre and Vitorino Chantre: "This flower that wilts, this child that cries, this cloud that passes, it's nostalgia, it's sadness... The world changes, but my story continues."

[www.cesaria-evora.com](http://www.cesaria-evora.com)

## Dr Natesan Ramani (India)

Revered as the most eminent modern flute player in the Carnatic (South Indian) tradition, Dr Natesan Ramani mesmerised WOMADelaide 2001 audiences with the soaring power and piercing clarity of his simple bamboo soprano flute. Honoured by the Indian President with the coveted Padmashri award, Dr Ramani is a deeply religious man, who, like Mahatma Gandhi, observes silence one day in the week – "to improve my breathing" – and travels barefoot for three days once a year to offer prayers at his chosen temple in Kerala. The highly sophisticated Carnatic music he performs has remained rooted in religious tradition (more than the better-known Hindustani music of north India that bears Persian traits through Muslim influence), and he renders the compositions of the three saint-composers of south India with devotional fervour.

Curiously, Dr Ramani also performs North Indian ragas on a larger, mellower sounding flute, often to conclude a concert. His ensemble includes his illustrious son Thiagarajan and brilliant grandson Athul on flutes, with percussionist V Raja Rao on mridangam (a tuned double-headed drum) and Trichy Murali on ghattam (a clay pitcher).

*By arrangement with Nataraj Cultural Centre and with support from the Indian Council for Cultural Relations*

## La Compagnie Carabosse (France)

WOMADelaide Exclusive

Having twice before transformed Botanic Park after dark with spectacular candle installations – at WOMADelaide 2004 and 2005 – this innovative French company will create another surreal world of flame by lashing long lines of fire pots between trees and in giant freestanding iron frames. Since 1997, La Compagnie Carabosse (The Wicked Fairy Company, so named after the villainous spell-caster in *The Sleeping Beauty*) has travelled across Europe to present illuminating installations at festivals and major outdoor events, and found favour internationally after celebrated work in Canada, Greece, China, Japan and Australia. The fire installation teams number anywhere from two to 40 artists, technicians, performers, metal construction workers and dreamers, varying according to each project and even embracing elements of theatre and musical performance to create ever more dramatic relationships with space, architecture, fire, the public and their emotions.

When the sun sets over a festival site, Carabosse get to work igniting their massed fire pots with great ceremony, creating a spectacular world of mesmerising amber glows through extraordinary flame sculptures. The company's innovative approach means that a location is never illuminated twice in the same fashion, ensuring Carabosse enjoys great artistic freedom to keep lighting up sites in myriad wondrous ways.

*Supported by the French Embassy in Australia, the Alliance Francaise and Cultures France and with thanks to Maersk Line.*

[www.ciecarabosse.fr](http://www.ciecarabosse.fr)

## Sharon Jones & the Dap-Kings (USA)

Hailing from Atlanta, Georgia, singer Sharon Jones has earned the title of America's Queen of Soul since collaborating in the late 1990s with Bosco Mann and the Dap-Kings – the star-studded house band of the Daptone Records label and icons of New York's Deep Funk scene.

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As a teenager, Jones moved to New York and soon progressed from singing in church to backup vocalist in recording sessions with funk and disco acts. When demand waned in the late 1980s, Jones worked at Rykers Island Jail as a corrections officer. It was not until 1996 that another singing opportunity arose, when Desco Records teamed her with its house-band, the Soul Providers, for songs that became hits in the New York funk scene. Daptone stepped in and recorded Jones's first full-length album in 2002 – *Dap Dippin' with Sharon Jones and the Dap-Kings*. A hit US television campaign for "I Love NY" featuring Jones & the Dap-Kings' version of *This Land is your Land* boosted their appeal, which escalated with the hit 2005 album *Naturally* and 267 shows through 14 countries to promote it. A new album – *100 Days, 100 Nights* – was released in late 2007 to critical acclaim, while artists including Kanye West and Jurassic 5 sampled the band's grooves, and Jones contributed her soulful voice to projects for Lou Reed, Rufus Wainwright and They Might Be Giants.

*By arrangement with Billions Australia*

[www.myspace.com/sharonjonesandthedapkings](http://www.myspace.com/sharonjonesandthedapkings)

## Taraf de Haidouks (Romania)

WOMADelaide Exclusive

From Europe's largest Gypsy community comes the "band of honourable brigands" – a dozen respected lautari (traditional musicians) from the village of Clejani in the Valachian countryside that range in age from early 20s to late 70s. These spirited characters present a rich tapestry of musical colours and textures, sweeping the gamut from medieval ballads to Turkish-flavoured dance tunes from the Balkans, with irresistible rhythms propelled by twin accordions and a rocking slapped bass, offset by fiddles, cimbalom (dulcimer) and passionate vocal pyrotechnics.

Taraf de Haidouks, which formed in 1989, was brought to the attention of the wider world by Swiss musicologist Laurnet Aubert, who stumbled upon the village musicians during travels through Romania in 1986, and Belgian musician Stephane Karo, who recorded the troupe in 1991, gave them a name and introduced them to European touring. Smitten by Taraf's vivaciousness, crowds delighted in their energetic performances and embraced their recordings. The gypsy troupe's uniqueness also attracted famous collaborators; from filmmaker Tony Gatlif who featured Taraf in his influential film *Latcho Drom*, to recordings and concert performances with Kronos Quartet, and even participation as models-cum-musicians in fashion designer Yohji Yamamoto's Paris and Tokyo shows. Actor Johnny Depp, who befriended the band when they worked together on the set of director Sally Potter's movie *The Man Who Cried*, summed up the allure of Taraf best: "They have this gift to make you feel alive."

[tarafdehaidouks.calabashmusic.com](http://tarafdehaidouks.calabashmusic.com)

## Terem Quartet (Russia)

WOMADelaide Exclusive

Injecting fresh life into traditional Russian folk music, Terem Quartet laces its performances with humour, theatrical showmanship and vivacious energy while running the gamut from gypsy melodies to Tchaikovsky. Formed in 1986, the St Petersburg quartet of Andrey onstantinov and Alexey Barshchev playing dorma (Russian lute), Andrey Smirnov on accordion and Mikhail Dzyudze on the gigantic double-bass balalaika, has pioneered a new way of playing music on folk instruments, combining academic conservatory training with elements of improvisation inherent in folk creativity. The ensemble's repertoire includes more than 200 pieces – original transcriptions based on popular themes from Bach and Mozart to Bizet and Rimsky-Korsakov – that embraces Old Russian folk art principals of celebrating music as a miraculous force.

Having visited 56 countries to stage more than 2000 concerts, Terem has performed with such diverse musicians as Peter Gabriel, Bobby McFerrin, the musicians of Led Zeppelin, violinist Nigel Kennedy – even playing in the Vatican before the Pope and Mother Teresa. In 2003, the musicians founded their own annual Terem-Festival of World Music in St Petersburg. They delighted audiences at the 1993 and 1997 WOMADelaide festivals and, significantly, acknowledge WOMAD as a crucial platform for presenting their idiosyncratic sound: "Through WOMAD we can bring our large Russian soul to the entire world."

[www.terem-quartet.ru](http://www.terem-quartet.ru)

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## Titi Robin (France)

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Hailing from western France, Thierry "Titi" Robin presents an original interpretation of Gypsy music. A self-taught musician who has grown as an artist through a 20-year career that has spawned 600 live performances and seven albums that have amassed almost 100,000 sales, Titi plays oud, bouzouki and guitar, borrowing from disparate musical sources. Shunning stylistic tags, he says he has built a personal musical universe by borrowing instinctively from various sources – the most prominent being music from India and North Africa, gleaned inspiration from the influence of both Gypsy and Eastern cultures without ever simply copying them.

Two main instrumental masters greatly influenced Titi's playing style – the flamenco cantaor Camaron de la Isla, and Iraqi oud master Munir Bachir – though he says that simply combining music from different parts of the world has no value in itself. Instead, he strives to translate the feeling at the heart of creation, either by echoing purely traditional styles or by transforming established codes. While the mainstream music scene in France did not initially appreciate his hybrid sound, Titi reached an enthusiastic audience through community celebrations, earning plaudits and devotion for an exotic stage presence that has been hailed as a Gypsy party of exuberance and improvisation.

*Supported by the French Embassy in Australia and the Alliance Francaise*

[www.thierrytirobin.com](http://www.thierrytirobin.com)

## The Black Arm Band (Australia)

In 2006, a veritable superband of Australian Indigenous talent was brought together to perform Murundak, a powerful musical event with accompanying film images. Murundak means 'alive' in the Woiwurrung language, and it was created to make the contemporary Aboriginal story live through songs and performance. To bring Murundak to life, a 32-member ensemble – the Black Arm Band – was assembled by musical directors Shane Howard and David Arden, and performed during the Melbourne International Arts Festival in October 2006. Songs featured in Murundak were drawn from the contemporary Indigenous songbook, outlining the history of Indigenous struggle in Australia, though many of these anthems were re-orchestrated and coupled with gentle laments and infectious love songs to take audiences on a spiritual journey.

For WOMADelaide 2008, Murundak will be brought to life again by an all-star assembly of Aboriginal artists including Stephen Pigram, Archie Roach, Ruby Hunter, Lou Bennett, Joe Geia and Kev Carmody. The soundtrack they will perform is alive with expressions of joy, hope, struggle and compassion, celebrating music as an instrument of identity, resistance and resilience. Jan Chandler, writing in Melbourne Stage Online, captured the essential spirit of Murundak: "There are no stars here; the 'star' is the music and the stories it tells, the stories of Aboriginal Australians."

*Presented in association with Arts House*



[www.myspace.com/theblackarmband](http://www.myspace.com/theblackarmband)

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