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I EXIST
—
to Rajasthan

I EXIST – to Rajasthan

Marc Sinan Company & Dresdner Sinfoniker

With Marc Sinan, Iva Bittová, Raju Bhopa, Dayam Khan, Papamir
Dresdner Sinfoniker: Maria Schneider, Sascha Friedl, Mathias Gunnarsson, Tom Götze
No Borders Orchestra: Saša Mirković, Stanko Madić, Nikola Jovanović, Vladimir Blagojević

Composition & Artistic Direction: Marc Sinan – Producer: Markus Rindt
Stage design: Delaine & Damian Le Bas – Dramaturgy, Libretto: Holger Kuhla
Coordination India: Vinod Joshi – Camera: Hans-Peter Eckardt – Interviews: Nataly Bleuel

*A staged concert by Marc Sinan Sinan Company & Dresdner Sinfoniker
with musicians, artists, ensembles and institutions from the Roma community,
Europe and India.*

*A co-production of Marc Sinan Company/YMUSIC
in partnership with Dresdner Sinfoniker, Dresden, Germany*

and

*HELLERAU – European Center for the Arts Dresden, Germany
whiteBOX, München, Germany
No Borders Orchestra, Serbia
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I EXIST

SOME SORT OF HUMANS BRINGS IN STRANGE CAPSULES
AND LANDING IN FRONT OF MY HOUSE TELLING ME:
"MILL THOUSANDS OF YEARS AGO WE WENT AWAY
BUT WE ARE OF THE SAME CULT."

I FEEL LIKE MY WHOLE LIFE IS A BIT
LIKE A BROKEN JIGSAW PUZZLE
IT'S QUITE HARD TO EXPLAIN TO PEOPLE
THAT IT'S QUITE DIFFICULT WHEN YOU'RE
SOMETIMES IT FEELS LIKE HOVERING
BOY IT ALL AND YOU'RE SORT OF IN IT

*...I feel like my whole life is bit like a broken jigsaw puzzle,
really, that I've always been trying puzzle back together...*

Damian Le Bas

Ancient tales chronicle the roots of the Roma from Rajasthan. For the avant-garde musician Iva Bittová and the artist duo Damian & Delaine Le Bas, this encounter with the reputed birthplace of the Roma also meant coming face-to-face with a part of their heritage. And this journey into the unknown turns into a journey to the roots of their own existence.

'I EXIST – nach Rajasthan' (I EXIST – to Rajasthan) tells the story of survival – of the remarkable strength that allowed the Roma & Sinti people to overcome centuries of hostility and even the attempt by the Third Reich to annihilate them completely from the face of the earth.

An evening of contemporary and traditional Indian music, featuring video and interview excerpts from a joint research trip to India, eclectic costumes and stage décor by Damian & Delaine Le Bas, a breathtaking performance by Iva Bittová and outstanding traditional Indian musicians.

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**A no-holds-barred exchange of ideas and musical riches
An intercultural, interdisciplinary panorama**

Orchestral musicians from Germany (Dresdner Sinfoniker) and the former Yugoslavia (No Borders Orchestra), along with prestigious venues and cultural institutions from all corners of Europe and India, use 'I Exist – nach Rajasthan' as a vehicle to examine the concept of belonging, while ensuring that their unique personal experiences are mirrored by the production.

A diverse outreach programme that encourages both young and old in the various host locations and countries to independently examine – from an artistic and thematic perspective – their attitudes to people with different cultural roots.



Marc Sinan is a guitarist and composer. He has made guest appearances at many renowned festivals such as the Schleswig-Holstein Musik Festival, the Istanbul Festival, the Istanbul Jazz Festival, the Enjoy Jazz Festival, the Tonlagen Festival, the MaerzMusik Festival at the Berliner Festspiele and at the Handel Festspiele.

In addition to international solo appearances and chamber music projects with partners such as the Julia Hülsmann Trio, Jörg Widmann, the Turkish percussionist Burhan Öcal and the Iranian Kamancheh player Kayhan Kalhor, Marc Sinan has also performed as a soloist with orchestras such as the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra and the Georgian Chamber Orchestra.

With his own ensemble, the Marc Sinan Company, he has since gone on to produce highly acclaimed projects within a contemporary, intercultural and multimedia context. His project 'Hasretim – Journey to Anatolia', which had its premiere in October 2010, was awarded the 'Welthorizont' prize by the German UNESCO Commission. In 2012, Marc Sinan was awarded an artist-in-residence scholarship by the German Foreign Office for the recently opened Tarabya Cultural Academy in Istanbul.

In 2014 Marc Sinan presented his comprehensive docufictional music theatre 'Dede Korkut – The story of Tepegöz' for orchestra, vocals, movement and video. 'Dede Korkut' marked the continuation of his collaboration with the Dresdner Sinfoniker and premiered in February 2014 at the Festspielhaus Hellerau and the Maxim Gorki Theater to vast critical acclaim. In 2015 he has mostly dedicated himself to projects commemorating the Armenian genocide. This includes his own musical theatre 'Komitas' which was commissioned by the Tonspuren Festival at Kloster Irsee and also presented at Berlin's Maxim Gorki theatre; as well as commissions from Vache Sharafyan and Helmut Oehring, who have written large scale orchestral works for the 'Aghet' project, a collaboration with the Dresdner Sinfoniker, in the context of the centennial featuring Sinan as a soloist.

In early 2016 Sinan is teaching as a guest lecturer at Whitman College in Walla Walla, US.

The **Dresdner Sinfoniker** are amongst the leading symphony orchestras for contemporary music. The ensemble's productions – which feature musicians from almost every important European orchestra – have received numerous awards, including the UNESCO special prize “Welthorizont” and the ECHO for classical music. The Dresdner Sinfoniker are a laboratory for multimedia projects, making sounds visible and colours audible. Their performance conditions are always exceptional: instead of sitting in an orchestra pit, the orchestra is seated on the balconies of an industrialised apartment block as during the *Hochhaussinfonie*, 2006; or the conductor, instead of standing in front of his musicians, is broadcast live, like a hologram from another world as in *Erstes Ferndirigat der Welt*, 2008. The Dresdner Sinfoniker's big events, featuring large screen projections and live performance, are complex musical scores of events. They have the artistic power to make audiences sit up and take notice.

The Dresdner Sinfoniker have already collaborated with the **No Borders Orchestra** on numerous occasions – most recently for *Aghet* (2015/16), the German-Turkish-Armenian concert project that was a spectacular success and caused such a stir.

Featuring musicians that hail from all the new republics that have come into being since the break-up of the former Yugoslavia, the orchestra itself is a veritable symbol of reconciliation.



The artist duo **Damian & Delaine Le Bas** (both *1965) designed the stage décor and costumes for 'I EXIST – nach Rajasthan'. They were part of the British contingent at the third Prague Biennale in 2007, a year which also saw them feature in Paradise Lost, the first pavilion at the Biennale in Venice to showcase contemporary Sinti & Roma art. Their work is exhibited throughout the world.

Delaine Le Bas's artistic output involves merging embroidery, painting, sketching, sculpture, 'objets trouvés' and video to create installations that invariably trigger a sensory overload.

Her husband Damian Le Bas creates collages out of geographical and urban maps which he subsequently paints over and populates with human faces and strange beings. These give rise to new, highly complex artistic elements which he ascribes to his Huguenot, Irish and English-based Roma ancestry.

Born in 1958, **Iva Bittová** has developed her own inimitable means of expression through her voice and violin, levitating on the margins between jazz and New Music, Moravian folklore and classic songwriting. She has worked with luminary musicians like Fred Frith, Tom Cora, Chris Cutler and the Kronos Quartett, and acted in Zelary (2003), which went on to be nominated for an Oscar in the Best Foreign Film category.

The violin is a mirror reflecting my dreams and imagination. I believe there are fundamentals to my performance, such as the music's vibration and resonance between violin and my voice.

Iva Bittová



Papamir and **Dayam Khan** are members of the Manganiyar community, a Muslim caste renowned for its musicality and which used to play for the kings of Rajasthan in the days of old. Right up to the present day, the Manganiyars earn a living by playing music for their patrons in exchange for cattle, money or other goods. This traditional relationship has been passed down through the ages on both sides. Tradition dictates that the families of the patrons engage the services of the musicians and reward them accordingly.

Ever since he was a child, Papamir's Manganiyar family have eagerly supported his passion for music. He plays the dholak, a traditional tubular drum, and is widely regarded as one of the finest folk musicians to be found anywhere. He has collaborated with musicians from all corners of the globe, both at home and abroad.

Dayam Khan's father is a famous singer and player of the kamayacha – a traditional string instrument.

Accompanied by his father, Dayam Khan has been visiting the houses of patrons since the tender age of eight. He sings and plays the harmonium. His repertoire includes countless Sufi songs, which really come to life with his unique voice.

The expression 'Bhopa-Bhopi' means not only priest or priestess, but also has many other connotations. While some Bhopas are attached to a temple, many others opt for the nomadic lifestyle. **Raju Bhopa** is a wandering Bhopa. She comes from a traditional Bhopa family of musicians in a village called Rajaldesar in Rajasthan.

She is widely acclaimed for her recitations of the ballads of the folk deity 'Pabuji', an art passed on from her mother, and her repertoire also includes a host of other tunes and sacrificial songs.





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Delaine] & Damian Le Bas

