

The Book of Sand

AUSTRALIAN PREMIERE / FREE INTERACTIVE DIGITAL ARTWORK

Michel Van der Aa, The Netherlands/Australia



Photo: Harm Griekspoor

"A completely new genre... a giant leap forward"
Trouw

"a wonder of cultural-technological significance... you flow from one level to the next, buoyed by the continuous, completely synchronic music."
NRC

"gripping, beautiful and mesmerising stuff... a labyrinth where one could roam endlessly."
De Volkskrant

[Van der Aa's] "ability to fuse music, text and visual images into a totally organic whole sets him apart from nearly all his contemporaries."
The Guardian

Jump online to experience *The Book of Sand* and explore this incredible work, created exclusively in digital format. An interactive song cycle inspired by the theme of 'infinity' in **Jorge Luis Borges'** stories, *The Book of Sand* invites viewers to create their own path by switching between storytelling layers in a complex work of infinite beauty.

Composed by **Michel Van der Aa** as three parallel layers of music and film, with the enigmatic title role performed by singer-songwriter **Kate Miller-Heidke**, viewers can freely move between three worlds – stone galleries, a cellar and a desolate desert – as the music shifts seamlessly from abstract electronic to alt-pop, then a capella with **Nederlands Kamerkoor**, a 12-voice choir.

The Book of Sand takes its title from a short story by Jorge Luis Borges, and is based on this and four other Borges stories, *The Zahir*, *The Aleph*, *The Library of Babel*, and *The House of Asterion*. In Borges' story, the Book of Sand is a book with infinite pages, with no beginning and no end, which becomes an obsession and gradually consumes its owner. The other stories all deal in similar Borgesian visions of the infinite – a point that contains all other points in the universe, an object that holds the attention so much that it becomes all of reality itself, a library of all possible books, the Minotaur in an infinite labyrinth.

Borges is often described as having foretold the Internet, and Van der Aa uses online technology to explore his ideas in ways the writer could not have foreseen.

Michel Van der Aa is a truly multidisciplinary figure in contemporary music. A unique voice, he combines composition and script writing with film and stage direction. His multi-award winning compositions have been performed by ensembles and orchestras worldwide. A frequent collaborator, he has worked with classical and pop musicians as well as with actors and novelists. Van der Aa has also won acclaim for his multimedia works for the stage and concert hall, and he has directed both the filmed and staged elements of all of these works. His operas have been staged in more than a dozen countries. He is currently developing a new chamber opera for soprano, baritone and 3D film.

Multi-disciplinary singer-songwriter, Kate Miller-Heidke is a classically trained mezzo-soprano who has also had massive success with her cross-genre alt pop albums. Following the big label successes of her gold record *Little Eve* (2007), platinum record *Curiouser* (2008) and ARIA/iTunes chart breaker *Nightflight* (2012),

MEDIA RELEASE

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Miller-Heidke has gone independent with her own label and released her fourth album *O Vertigo* (2013). She is also starring in *The Rabbits*, an exciting new Australian opera based on John Marsden's iconic children's book.

Nederlands Kamerkoor formed over 75 years ago and is one of the world's top choirs, has won international praise, awards and recorded almost 80 albums.

The Book of Sand can be accessed online now, and downloaded through the App store.

Composition, film script, direction
based on short stories by
Mezzo-soprano
Choir
Conductor

Michel van der Aa
Jorge Luis Borges
Kate Miller-Heidke
Nederlands Kamerkoor
MaNOj Kamps

Where sydneyfestival.org.au/sand

Tickets FREE
iOS
ANDROID, WINDOWS & DESKTOP.
The Book of Sand is best experienced in the Google Chrome Browser.

Co-commissioned and co-produced by Holland Festival and Sydney Festival. Co-sponsored by Google Cultural Institute. Developed in association with BBC The Space.

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