

BUSKERS BERN FESTIVAL, 2019

 Bern, Switzerland

Chosen by **Venla Ilona Blom** from the Finnish *a capella* group **Tuuletär**


Buskers Bern is an absolutely wonderful street art festival in Switzerland. We did our debut there in 2018 and were very lucky to be asked to return the following year. This crazy three-day shindig celebrates cultural diversity and different art forms in such a rich, thoughtful and fun way and provides high class acts for the audience as well as a big, exciting, sweaty and rewarding experience for all the performing artists. Our most memorable moment happened on the second night in 2019. We had already played a concert and still had three more to go. During our second performance heavy rain started. We kept going for a while but were worried we would have to skip our third concert (also outdoors). However, at the end of the set, the organisers climbed on stage and told us and the audience that our next set had been relocated to a secret small inside space but it would only fit 100 people (there was around 500 in the audience). What happened next was incredible: the audience literally followed us, helped carry our stuff and then waited 45 minutes in pouring rain just to make sure they would get in. At least 100 people were left outside. We did an incredible intimate acoustic performance with our clothes and hair dripping water and our insides burning with love and joy towards the audience and the organisers. It was a truly magical moment and a grand gesture from the festival, the venue owner as well as from the enthusiastic, loving, dedicated audience.

www.buskersbern.ch/en

Buskers Bern returns August 12-14 2021



CAMBRIDGE FOLK FESTIVAL, 2015 & 2019

 Cambridge, UK

Chosen by award-winning concertina player **Mohsen Amini**

Cambridge Folk Festival has to be up there as one of my all-time favourite festivals. I remember when we started out with Talisk, it was one of the first festivals we had ever played. It was surreal walking about the site bumping into artists that I only knew from listening to on tape or CD. We were lucky enough to be down when there was a bit of a Scottish invasion. Band after band totally rocked the place but it was the Saturday night that stuck with me. We went to the main stage to see Treacherous Orchestra close it and I just remember thinking 'That is the dream,' and not remembering very much after that due to the mandatory early night we musicians have all pledged to take... Fast forward a few years to 2019 and by some miracle Talisk were doing that very same slot. It was a massive life highlight for me, seeing the whole festival dancing along to our music and is something that will forever stick with me, along with my shirt that was pretty much soaked to the bone in sweat from the most intense hour of my life!

www.cambridgelive.org.uk/folk-festival

Cambridge Folk Festival returns in 2021, see p70 for details of this year's Cambridge Folk Festival At Home

DARBAR FESTIVAL, 2013

 Southbank Centre, London, UK


Chosen by percussionist **Bernhard Schimpelberger**

When you walk into London's Southbank Centre and you feel like you have just entered a temple in India, then you know it must be the Darbar Festival. It's one of my favourite festivals in the world because it takes you straight into the heart of the wonderful world of Indian classical music. The line-up has featured a balanced mix of well-known artists and newcomers, which provides something new to discover as well as legends to look forward to. Indian music lovers come from all around Europe to immerse themselves in the sounds of traditional music. Among the many concerts that I attended in 2013, I vividly remember the *tabla* solo concert by Pandit Yogesh Samsi. He is one of my favourite percussionists in the world and his one-hour-long rhythm recital displayed dazzling rhythmical complexity, explored through the poetic language of *tabla*. What a treat to experience this right in the heart of London!

www.darbar.org

Darbar will host a digital festival later this year

FESTIVAL IN THE DESERT, 2000/2001

 Tin Essako, Mali

Chosen by guitarist **Justin Adams**

Twenty years ago, having spent three weeks recording and hanging around in the desert town of Kidal, northern Mali, I struck out across the dunes to a sandy plain outside the tiny hamlet of Tin Essako for the first edition of the Festival in the Desert. The Touareg are masters at organising nomadic gatherings with camel racing and *tinde* drumming under the magnificent stars. I had come with French band Lo'Jo, we had brought a generator and a PA system with the idea of adding elements of a Western festival to the traditional Touareg gathering. My diary is a chaotic blur, but the images in my head, of the crowd raising sand, grooving to the driving sound of Tinariwen, the sword dances, the time-shifting *takamba* rhythm, the camel racers circling the women ululating to the sound of the *tinde* drum, and the New Year's lunar eclipse adding an eerie radiance to the endless horizons will stay with me forever. May the Festival in the Desert return, in times of peace and health.

www.festival-au-desert.org