

ZemZemeh

—*Rhyme & Reason*—

Presenter Pack



A post-digital spiritual gathering and bold reimagining of ancient mystical ceremony through live music, immersive visuals, sacred poetry and dance.

Created by genre-defying duo Zemzemeh, Siyavash Doostkhah & Greta Kelly, this multi-arts performance fuses Persian Sufi mysticism, visual storytelling and hip-hop aesthetics into a one-of-a-kind contemporary ritual.

Original music, animated sacred geometry, translations and whirling Sama dance, brings to life the verses of Rumi, Hafez, and Attar for modern audiences.

About Rhyme & Reason

Rhyme & Reason is a ceremonial fusion of Persian Sufi music, poetry, and dance interlaced with hip-hop beats, synth drones, and sampled textures, while translations of Rumi, Hafez, and Attar glow across live sacred-geometry visuals.

Every element is crafted to lead audiences beyond the intellect into heart-knowledge: a direct taste of deeper reality where separation softens, listening becomes union, and a near-trance emerges, a post-digital dhikr for the modern soul.

The creative team is Siyavash Doostkhah (vocals, tanbour, synths, samples), Greta Kelly (shah kaman, vocals), with visuals by Andrew Gibbs (visuals).

Tag line

Ancient mysticism meets modern beats

Highlights video



[View Rhyme & Reason Highlights Video](#)

Rhyme & Reason Show Overview

Show duration: 50-60 minutes

Bump-in/lighting plot/sound check: 1 hour (depending on pre-rig)

Bump-out: 10 minutes

Tech requirements: standard lighting rig, data projector and projection surface, PA, 16 channel desk, 2 x vocal mics plus stands, 1 x DI & two armless chairs

Zemzemeh provides: laptop to trigger Qlab AV files from on-stage, Sennheiser IEMs

Touring party: 3 PAX

Tech operators required from venue: lighting operator

Artists & Crew

Rhyme & Reason tours with the following artists:

- Siyavash Doostkhah - vocals, tanbour, synths, samples
- Greta Kelly - shah kaman, vocals
- Marco Foxlee – audio engineer and AV set up support

Optional collaboration with 1-2 local percussionists and one local whirling ‘Sama’ dancer.

[Artist & crew bios/CVs](#)



[View interview with Zemzemeh \(video courtesy of BEMAC\)](#)

Optional collaboration with local musicians and dancers

Zemzemeh’s deeply respectful and innovative cultural encounter between Aboriginal musicians and dancers and traditional Persian arts is rooted in Sufi mystical tradition. At the heart of the project is the recognition that both cultures have long-standing practices that honour the sacred through rhythm, melody, and embodied movement. Devotional instruments including tanbour and shah kaman, dialogue with the didgeridoo and clapsticks, foundational to Aboriginal songlines and ceremony.

[View a brief video about Zemzemeh’s past collaboration](#)



Community Engagement

Siyavash Doostkhah facilitates 1-3 optional Mystical Poetry Workshops that can be programmed in advance of the performance season.

These workshops are of interest to the general public as well as poets and community poetry and spiritual groups, and provide a wonderful introduction to the show's themes.

The workshops can also be delivered to teenagers - Siyavash has over 35 years experience in the youth work sector as director of NGO, Youth Affairs Network of Queensland and a youth worker.

Sample Copy: Mystical Poetry Workshop 1

Step into the timeless world of Sufi mysticism and Persian poetry. This free workshop invites you to explore the layered wisdom of five influential mystic poets; Rumi, Hafez, Ibn Arabi, Attar, and Saadi.

Through reflective readings, guided discussions, and meditative exercises, discover how their verses unlock deeper truths about love, the self, and the divine. No prior knowledge of Persian poetry or Sufism is required, just a willingness to listen, reflect, and connect.

Come and discover how the wisdom of the past speaks to the questions and longings of today. The content of the each workshop will not be the same or progressive, so registering for either or both is welcome.

These workshops are the perfect prelude to Zemzemeh's Rhyme & Reason, a multi-arts performance at xxx on xxx. The show fuses ancient Persian acoustic instruments with electronica, weaving sacred geometry, rhythmic animations, and translations into an immersive journey through the mystical music and poetry of Iran.





Rhyme & Reason Show Copy

A post-digital spiritual gathering, a bold reimagining of ancient mystical ceremony through live music, immersive visuals, and sacred poetry. Created by genre-defying duo Zemzemeh, Siyavash Doostkhah & Greta Kelly, this multi-arts performance fuses Persian Sufi mysticism, electronic sound, visual storytelling and hip-hop aesthetics into a one-of-a-kind contemporary ritual.

Featuring original music that merges ancient instruments, tanbour and shah kaman, with hip-hop beats, synths, and samples, and projected translations with animated sacred geometry. Persian-language vocals bring to life the verses of Rumi, Hafez, and Attar, offering a sound that sits somewhere between a spiritual invocation and a new form of mystical hip-hop. This fusion not only reimagines the ancient teachings for modern audiences but also revitalises the cultural narrative, making it relevant to younger generations seeking meaning and identity in a fragmented world.

While grounded in mysticism, the show culminates in a powerful collaboration that brings together a Sufi Sama ceremony with the spiritual music and dance of local Yuggera/Quandamooka artists. This rare exchange, blessed by both Sufi and local Aboriginal Elders, is a symbolic act of shared sacred expression, a convergence of two devotional traditions, each rooted in deep listening, rhythm, and connection to the unseen. Rhyme & Reason also features a single verse by Rumi, whispered in 26 different languages. This subtle spiritual tapestry of voices, each distinct yet united, symbolises harmony through diversity and the profound beauty of unity in multiplicity.

The show explores universal themes of divine love, oneness, and inner transformation amidst an artistic dialogue between ancestral knowledge and contemporary longing, a search for meaning across sound, story, and spirit.

Sufi wisdom

The poetry of Persian Sufi masters like Rumi, Hafez, and Attar is a treasure trove of spiritual insight, offering profound lessons on divine love, unity, and the soul's journey. Yet these messages are often obscured by centuries of history, language barriers, and cultural distance. *Zemzemeh* aims to reawaken these teachings by translating them into the universal language of rhythm and melody. At its core, the aim of *Zemzemeh* is to:

- To reintroduce the spiritual depth of Sufi poetry to a broad audience,
- To do so in a way that resonates with contemporary sensibilities, employing the immediacy of hip-hop beats and the immersive quality of electronic bass.

Instruments of tradition

At the heart of *Zemzemeh*'s sound are ancient Persian instruments: the tanbour and the shah kaman, each a vessel of mysticism and storytelling.

The tanbour

- Revered as a sacred instrument in Persian Sufi tradition, the tanbour produces hypnotic tones that resonate deeply with the human psyche.
- Its rhythmic strumming mirrors the cycles of breath and the heartbeat, anchoring listeners in the present moment while evoking an otherworldly serenity.

The shah kaman

- Known as the "spiked fiddle" or "shah kaman" the shah kaman is made by Australian luthier Peter Biffin in collaboration with Kayhan Kalhor, master of Persian Kamancheh, Iran's ancient traditional bowed instrument celebrated for its ability to mimic the human voice.
- It has a hauntingly expressive timbre that transcends language, channeling yearning, joy, and introspection.

View full archival video of *Rhyme & Reason* available on request

***Rhyme and Reason* past performance history**

Industry showing @ Queensland Multicultural Centre (QMC) April 2025 presented by BEMAC.
Premiere @ QMC October 2025 with support of Queensland Government and BEMAC.

Concert program / Poetry booklet

This full-colour A5 booklet is provided to audience members as they enter the venue.

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1ZLbAYT11wCdSfhB2xF-dJU2WFgBp27Vi/view?usp=sharing>

Translations by Siyavash Doostkhah

Reviews & testimonials

Kitty Goodall, Stage Whispers

<https://www.stagewhispers.com.au/reviews/zemzemeh-rhyme-reason>

The sonic palette which was a carefully layered blend of traditional Persian instruments, hip-hop beats, synths, and samples, expanded the spiritual text into a universal language.

Hannah Attwood, Premiere Presenting Partner, BEMAC

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1hf2H2pfD8v7YI4mT2PDjUoz27hFoP2Bq/view?usp=sharing>

What distinguished this production was its ability to function simultaneously as contemporary performance and sacred ceremony—a delicate balance that required enormous artistic skill and cultural sensitivity. The show was meticulously thought-out and impeccably put together.

Kerry McGovern, Westender

<https://westender.com.au/zemzemeh-rhyme-and-reason-at-bemac-24th-october-2025/>

Against a multimedia background of rotating tiles from the Imam Mosque in Esfahan, the words from the ancient poets, translated in English, kept the audience mesmerised as the music held our hearts.

Tech specs

[Rhyme & Reason Tech Specs and Stage Plan](#)

Media kit

[Rhyme & Reason Media Release](#) (generic only, an updated Media Release will be sent to future presenters three months prior to the show)

[Rhyme & Reason Hero and Workshop Promo Images](#)

Zemzemeh online

<https://zemzemeh.au>

<https://www.facebook.com/zemzemehmusic>

https://www.instagram.com/zemzemeh_music

<https://www.youtube.com/@ZemzemehMusic>

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