

makers were getting onto boats to escape the bushfires. By the grace of God go all of us."

Bridie and Howard repeatedly comment on the remarkable fortitude of Bandesh and Moz, and the way both Kurds consistently favour gratitude and hope. Bandesh's current single 'Friendship', released in June and recorded in collaboration with classically inspired Melbourne folk singer Laura Jean, tells of camaraderie across a divide. Bandesh recorded visuals and the vocals on his phone (a high court order allows detainees access to phones and social media) from inside the MITA facility.

As a detainee on Manus Island, 34-year-old Moz Azimi suffered beatings with an iron bar and the death of his friend Reza Barati, who was murdered by detention centre employees (two of whom were convicted) in 2014. Having sung and played guitar since a teenager, music is his therapy. Moz's first song, 2017's 'All the Same' was written, rapped and sung from inside Manus with the aid of musicians, technicians and supporters in Australia. In 2019 he was transferred to the Mantra Hotel suffering from asthma. At the time of writing, along with 65 other refugees and asylum seekers he remains locked in his room on the third floor for 23 hours a day, his mental health – like Bandesh's – unchecked.

"These people are hiding in plain sight, and rotting away," says Jim Moginie, who produced and mixed Moz's current song 'Love', a catchy ballad expressing gratitude to the demonstrators who

keep a vigil outside the hotel (*'I'm looking at you from the window/I wanna tell you I love you'*), which Moz played on a guitar given to him by Australian rock legend, Jimmy Barnes. "My feeling is if you're silent in the face of these injustices then you're implicit."

"Moz recorded this song on a Samsung phone, and I put some instruments around that," he continues. "It was a fast process. A friend did a video. Everyone wanted to help. Moz is such a sweet man, with a real talent for guitar, which he plays in a

very distinctive Kurdish style. He says he's strong – but how long can you keep going in the face of a blank future?"

That Australia's immigration detention system has randomly freed some of those who arrived by boat, permitting them to

build livelihoods, join communities, makes the incarceration of Bandesh and Moz – men who have committed no offence – all the more soul destroying. Speaking from inside the grim, grey Mantra, Moz says that playing guitar helps him forget his surroundings. His guitar is his best friend, he says, especially now that Bandesh is elsewhere.

Moz tells me he took up guitar aged 16 after hearing the famous, deeply felt track 'Age Ye Rooz Beri Safar' by legendary Iranian-American singer-guitarist Faramarz Aslani. "I asked my father, a builder, to get me an instrument, and I taught myself to play. I loved the way some Kurdish songs sounded almost Spanish," says Moz, the youngest of six brought up in Kermanshah, western Iran. He was at university studying English when he was forced to flee. "There is a unity inside Kurdish music. When people hear it, they come together. They hold hands and dance like they are family. I think music can always remind us that we are all one family. You, me, we are the same... The only difference, really, is that I am not free." ♦

+ HELP Support Bandesh and Moz by purchasing their music on Bandcamp at farhadbandeshband.bandcamp.com and mozmusic1.bandcamp.com

+ ALBUM Shane Howard's new album *Dark Matter* will be reviewed in the next issue, available September 4

+ VIDEO Watch 'Friendship' at bit.ly/farhadfriendship

