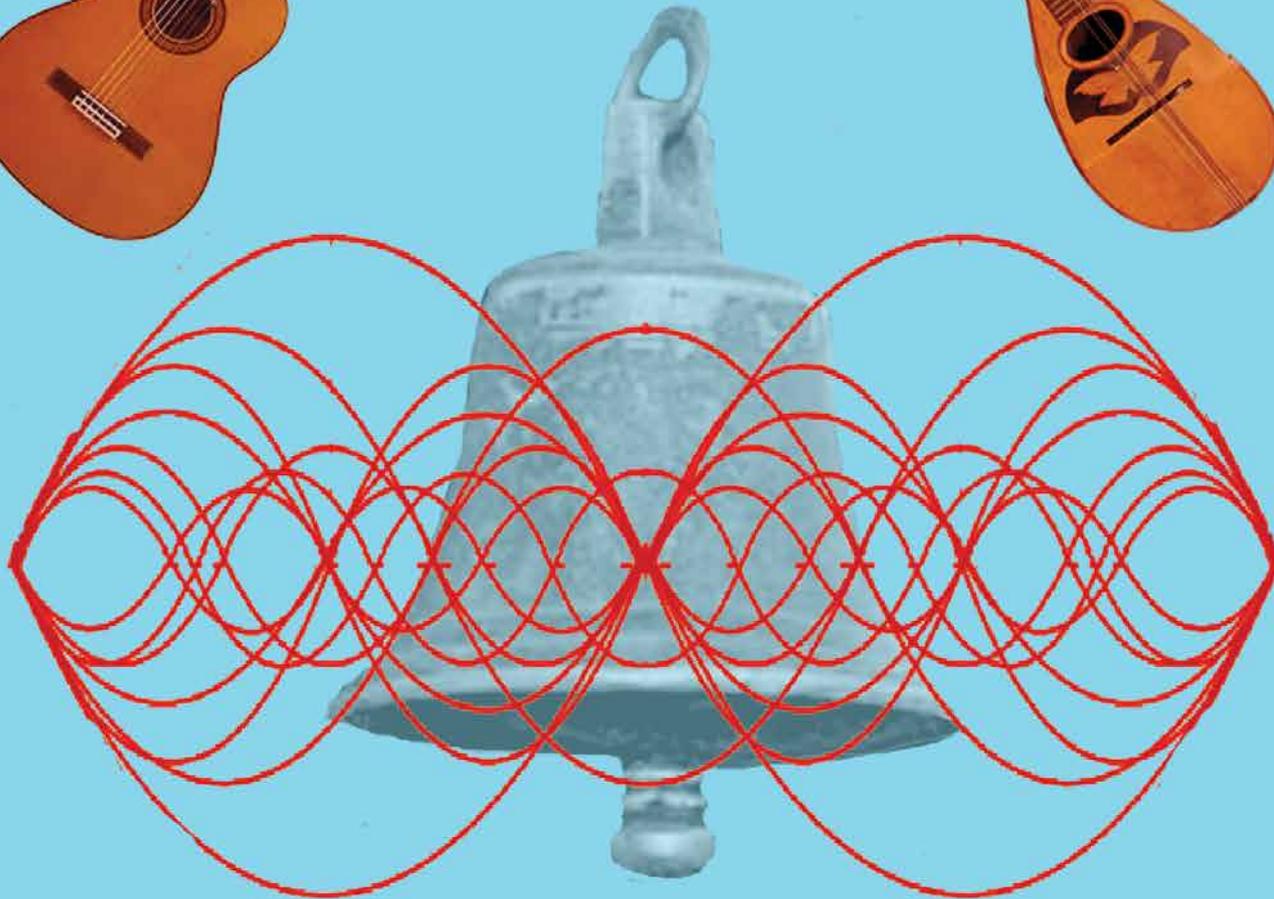


RINGING THE STRINGS

CONCORDIA



Concordia Mandolin and Guitar Ensemble



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|----|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------|--------------|
| 1 | Kangarella (The Aussie Tarantella)
Solo: accordion – Juliette Maxwell | MICHELLE NELSON | 2'31 |
| 2 | Berceuse | GABRIEL FAURE
(arr. Nelson) | 3'02 |
| 3 | Valse – Ballet (Erik Satie: arr. Nelson)
Solo: accordion – Juliette Maxwell | ERIK SATIE
(arr. Nelson) | 2'51 |
| | Ringing The Strings | MICHELLE NELSON | 10'47 |
| 4 | Allegretto | | 3'15 |
| 5 | Barcarolle and Waltz | | 3'09 |
| 6 | Rondo; allegro-grazioso-allegro | | 4'19 |
| | Little Suite For Strings | PETER SCULTHORPE | 7'31 |
| 7 | Sea Chant | | 2'17 |
| 8 | Little Serenade | | 2'13 |
| 9 | Left Bank Waltz | | 2'57 |
| | Midsummer Bagatelles | MICHELLE NELSON | 11'54 |
| 10 | A Foggy Morn | | 3'06 |
| 11 | Strawberry Fair | | 1'31 |
| 12 | Bullocks may graze safely | | 2'35 |
| 13 | A Midsummer Dance | | 1'23 |
| 14 | Midsummer Nocturne | | 3'13 |
| 15 | Hungarian Journey | FRANCOIS MENICHETTI | 4'46 |
| 16 | East-West
Solo mandolin: Michelle Wright
(Live recording) | STEPHEN LALOR | 4'40 |

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(Total disc time: 47 minutes)

The Ensemble:

Concordia Mandolin and Guitar Ensemble was formed in 1978. Its first conductor was the prominent guitarist, John Griffiths, now the head of the Sir Zelman Cowen School of Music. In 1984, Concordia, under the direction of Frank Mazzitelli, toured Italy, giving concerts in the central and northern cities. In 1996, the orchestra under the direction of Basil Hawkins, produced its first compact disc 'Salut d'Amour' followed by 'Eclectic Collection' in 1998, 'Forgotten Dreams' in 2002, and 'Flight' in 2005.

The present Ensemble consists of about 20 members comprising mandolins, mandolas, mandocellos, guitars, double basses and one piano accordion. It is frequently joined by woodwind, string or vocal soloists. Its repertoire includes a range of music from the seventeenth century to the present day. Concordia regularly performs in many venues in Melbourne and country Victoria.



The Musical Director:

Basil Hawkins has been the Musical Director and conductor of Concordia since 1988. Born in Northern India, he was taught piano and violin by his grandmother at an early age. When he was 16 years old, he was awarded a scholarship to the Calcutta School of Music, where he studied piano with visiting professors Kenneth and Jean Wentworth from the Julliard School of Music, New York. After migrating to Australia, Basil continued his education at Melbourne University completing a Bachelor of Music in 1971, and a performance degree in 1973. He has been involved in music education for many years, having held the positions of Assistant Director of Music at Essendon Grammar School (Melbourne), Director of Music at the Hutchins School (Hobart) and Director of Music at Carey Baptist Grammar School (Melbourne). Basil is an experienced conductor, adjudicator and examiner, and has a teaching practice in piano, and violin in Blackburn, Melbourne.



The Accordion Soloist:

Juliette Maxwell first started learning the piano accordion in England when she was eight years old. Although initially self-taught, much of her inspiration came from her mother who won many championships throughout the U.K. Juliette joined Concordia in 1994. Since then she has played the accordion both as a member of the ensemble and as a soloist. She has also played with other amateur orchestras around Melbourne, including the Melbourne Mandolin Orchestra, and professionally in the Legin production of Fiddler On The Roof, featuring Topol, at Melbourne's Regent Theatre. Juliette teaches piano accordion, piano, double bass and music theory. She plays double bass with the ensemble, performing on an instrument made by the late Giuseppe Corizzo.

The Selection:

Kangarella (the Aussie Tarantella)

The folk dance that caused documented social mania in some rural areas of Italy in the 19th century spawned the musical style of the 'Tarantella'. The seed for this lively work was sparked by the fanciful notion of "What might it have sounded like if that folk mania had occurred in Outback Australia?" That idea, combined with the availability of the Piano-accordion produced the delightfully bouncy 'Kangarella (the Aussie Tarantella)!

Berceuse

Gabrielle Faure's charming work Berceuse for Violin and Piano (Opus 16, in D Major) proved a natural fit for the plucked-string style. The lovely lilting melody adapts easily to the Italian-style tremolo sound on the mandolins, and the beautiful French Impressionist harmony seems tailor-made for the guitars. It evokes the feeling of relaxing in a café by the Seine!

Valse-Ballet

An early work by Satie for solo piano, the melody of this little whimsy seems to suggest the romantic sound of the Parisian Café accordion style. It was no surprise, then, when it proved a natural vehicle for piano accordion with plucked-strings, as if it was meant for this treatment all along! Once again it conjures up the image of a French café with the sound of the accordion floating in and out of conversation.

Ringling the Strings

This exuberant work is a concerto style workout for the whole orchestra. Every section participates in the exposition of the main themes and the subsequent development of the musical material. The three movements broadly follow the 18th Century Italian model of fast – slow – fast, but each one features tempi changes. The ideal for this work is to have plucked-strings doing what they do best: to "Chime, Ring and Sing!"

Little Suite

This is a plucked-string adaptation of Peter Scuthorpe's string ensemble arrangements of three of his most popular short pieces. Originally for piano, each exists in various other versions, but the string versions have proved to be well suited to plucked-strings interpretation.

Midsummer Bagatelles

Inspired by an extended stay close to the Midsummer Common in Cambridge, UK, this work also pays homage to the gentle pastoral style of the English composer Eileen Pakenham, who wrote several popular and highly regarded works for plucked-string orchestra. These five short character pieces have titles that reflect the land and the social use of the Common that flanks the River Cam, as it winds its way into the heart of the University precinct.

Hungarian Journey

A staple from the traditional Mandolin Orchestra canon, this work includes a rarely used optional Accordion part, tweaked a little for our own version. The rest of the performance is faithful to the Menichetti original and well represents the rich, Romantic 20th Century Mandolin-orchestra style.

East West

The third from a set of three pieces by Sydney composer Stephen Lalor, this version of East West was recorded live by 3MBS in October 2011 at St Johns Lutheran Church, Southbank, Melbourne. The genuine energy of the live performance brings out the character of this work better than a controlled studio recording is likely to. And with the spontaneous audience reaction at the end, it seemed an ideal way to conclude this album! The soloist is Michelle Wright, and the 3MBS recording engineer on the day was Steve Bullock.



The Composers:

Michelle Nelson is an active Melbourne - based professional musician who has written and recorded works for a range of instrument groupings. She has extensive live playing experience in a wide variety of performance situations ranging from full-time Rock covers bands and original Rock groups in the 80s/90s, to vocal & guitar, classical guitar and guitar & flute duos, plucked string ensembles and classical trios. She was 1st guitar & guitar section leader in the Melbourne Mandolin Orchestra from 2001 - 10 and played with the Australian Mandolin Orchestra in 2005–06. In 2013 she was invited to lead the guitar section in 'Concordia', also contributing compositions and arrangements to their repertoire. Her works for plucked-strings have attracted regular airplay and performances in Australia, and also received attention and performances in Europe and the U.K. Michelle is currently Concordia's composer in residence.



Gabriel Faure (1845 – 1924) distinguished French composer and teacher (he taught Maurice Ravel composition). His *Berceuse* for Violin and Piano remains a popular concert item. It is also often heard with flute playing the melody line.

Erik Satie (1866 – 1925) French composer, noted mostly for being 'colourful' and for his famous *Gymnopedie*. His output included numerous whimsical, short piano works, of which *Valse – Ballet* is a typical example.

Peter Sculthorpe (1929 – 2014). Renowned Australian composer known for both his distinctive, rich orchestral style as well as these short popular works. Originally for piano, Sculthorpe later arranged them for String ensemble, from which our plucked-string version is adapted.

Francois Menichetti (1894 – 1969) was a French mandolinist, composer and music writer in the European mandolin scene. Composed late in his life (1965) 'A travers la Hongrie' epitomizes Menichetti's Romantic 20th century style and remains a popular work with traditional plucked-string orchestras around the world.

Stephen Lalor is an active Sydney-based mandolinist, teacher and composer. His group "Plectra" is regularly heard on radio and several of his works are regularly performed by Mandolin-orchestras around the world.

Members of the Orchestra at the time of recording:

Joint leaders: Noeline Sherwin, Marion Blaze,

Regular members: Jenny Whittam, Cecilia Johnson, George Mitchell, Jim Greer, Judy John, Margaret O'Donnell, Annette Baldwin, Nola Elliot, Gunnar Rasmussen, Bruce Packard, Juliette Maxwell, Michelle Nelson, Carol Robinson, Susan Hadfield, Sue Martin, Noel Burgess, Tom Mastwyk, Joan Harris, Joe Santospirito, Bill Oldham.

Concordia Committee and the Musical Director would like to thank guest musicians Darryl Barron, Michelle Wright, Peter Mangold, Terry Harris, Dannielle Wilkinson and Earl Hunter for their valuable contribution to this recording. Thanks also to Martin Wright at **MOVE Records**, to Sally Hutchison at **3MBS** for making the East West recording available to us, and Steve Bullock for his expertise on concert day.

Cover artwork: Sue Martin

Butterfly watercolours: Noeline Sherwin

Recording information:

Tracks 1-15 recorded at MOVE studios, Eaglemont, from September 2014 to November 2016. Editors: Michelle Nelson, Vaughan McAlley.

