

after the fire



compositions by michelle nelson

after the fire

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Harmony on Lyttleton Street

- | | |
|----------------------|------|
| 01. I - Giocoso | 1'55 |
| 02. II - Barcarolle | 3'23 |
| 03. III - Allegretto | 1'54 |

Sonata for Flute & Guitar

- | | |
|-----------------------------------|------|
| 04. I - Andante e Rubato, Allegro | 4'29 |
| 05. II - Larghetto | 6'15 |
| 06. III - Rondo' Vivace | 3'48 |

Birrarung Suite

- | | |
|--------------------------|------|
| 07. I - 'Idyll' | 5'28 |
| 08. II - 'Decay' | 3'54 |
| 09. III - 'Regeneration' | 7'09 |

The Bells Of Beechworth

- | | |
|-----------------------------------|------|
| 10. I - Andantino | 2'44 |
| 11. II - Moderato | 1'46 |
| 12. III - Allegretto e Piacovole | 2'10 |
| 13. IV - Andantino | 1'54 |
| 14. V - Allegretto e senza Rubato | 1'23 |
| 15. VI - Poco Allegro e Piacovole | 3'16 |

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|---------------------------|------|
| 16. After The Fire | 6'44 |
|---------------------------|------|

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|------------------------|------|
| 17. Summer Rain | 4'03 |
|------------------------|------|

(total time 63 minutes)

Harmony On Lyttleton Street

Beautiful afternoon in Castlemaine (central Victoria). Delightful concert. Charming old buildings. All present in good cheer. The warm sweet burr of mandolins fills the air with melodies; music fills the heart and mind. Italian style with Australian melody: does Vivaldi's economy of form harmonize with the modern world?

Mvt 1 – Giocoso e leggiero
Mvt 2 – Barcarolle
Mvt 3 – Allegro moderato

Performed by: Ensemble Gervasio
[Michelle Wright, Joan Harris,
Darryl Baron, Michelle Nelson,
Earl Hunter]

Sonata for Flute & Guitar (in E Minor)

Classical structure. Long melodic lines. Tonality is not dead. Of the less common ensemble combinations, flute and guitar is one of the most sublime; melodic agility complimented by natural harmonic ability.

Mvt 1 – Andante rubato - Allegro
Mvt 2 – Larghetto, Expressivo e rubato
Mvt 3 – Rondo: Vivace

Performed by: Julie Danaher:
Flute & Michelle Nelson: Guitar

Birrarung Suite

The early European settlers of Melbourne's lower Yarra Valley wrote of a natural oasis: the peaceful, clear flowing waters of 'Birrarung' were augmented by a multitude of billabongs, fringed with native trees, shrubs and wildflowers. The surrounding area provided habitat to a wide

variety of native fauna and a homeland to the local indigenous inhabitants.

Then, for more than a century, everything from abattoir and tannery refuse to heavy manufacturing waste, even straight effluent were pumped daily into Birrarung. As early as the 1870s visitors were remarking on the river's degraded condition.

Gradually, it has been revived but not to its former condition. Instead, it is now a 'post-modern' river - notionally natural but remade. But, in the 21st Century, modern development pressures grind harder than ever.

The name 'Birrarung' is believed to have been the original name for the river amongst the area's indigenous people. The name 'Yarra' seems likely to have been a misunderstanding that referred to a specific location on the river (the 'turning basin' opposite the old Customs House). [Kristin

Otto: Yarra - A Diverting History of Melbourne's murky River, 2008]

The three movements reflect the stages of Birrarung in modern history:

Mvt 1 - *Idyll* - pre-European settlement

Mvt 2 - *Decay* - industrial degradation

Mvt 3 - *Regeneration* - the re-imagining of River Yarra

Performed by: Birrarung Trio:
Rumiko Saka - Violin, Karla Drazenovic - Cello,
Michelle Nelson - Guitar

The Bells of Beechworth

Blue sky. Crisp morning. Birds sing in trees. Distant voices. A passing car. And then the bells - what an amazing soundscape! Manuscript and pencil - quick! These bells are in the same key as a guitar's natural harmonics, The repeating melodic pattern, mostly pentatonic: a hint of the oriental. An echo of quieter days.

Six movements, scored for two guitars, the composer playing both: thanks to Richie B for his skill at the mixing desk!

After The Fire

Devastation by Nature. Strangely beautiful: charred and blackened tree trunks against an azure sky. Brilliant shoots of intense green sprouting all around. Little by little, bit-by-bit the emerging rhythm and harmony of their growth will re-paint this scene.

Performed by: the Concordia Mandolin & Guitar Orchestra, conducted by Basil Hawkins

Summer Rain

Hot. Sultry. January. Australia. Distant thunder rolls around the tangible edges of the world. Sometimes closer. The sweet sound of warm summer rain fills the air, calming and nourishing soil and soul alike.

Guitar solo with electro-acoustic soundscape. Guitar - Michelle Nelson, recorded sound effects and mixing - Richie Brain

Composer's comments

All work recorded at the Move Studio and Richmond Audio, from November 2011 to January 2013. Many thanks to Vaughan McAlley and Richie Brain for their keen ears and editing skills. Thanks also to the staff at Move and to Nerida, Aura-Lee and Dior at Richmond Audio.

Cover image: *Regeneration* by Sue Martin: free-motion machine stitching on painted and computer-printed polyester. Thank you Sue!

And a very big thank you to all the performers who donated time to this project: much of the music on this CD would remain unrealized if not for the generous dedication of you. Your assistance is greatly appreciated.



Michelle Nelson is a composer, guitarist and creative educator committed to developing instrumental works that are contemporary but also draw inspiration from traditional composition practice.

Her popular works *Brolga Dances*, *Capricorn Light* and *Pacifica* (2009), and *Amorevolezza* (2005) reflect these aims.

Michelle is driven by the belief that, in a world of cut-and-paste, computer-generated music, the art of written music composition is more vital than ever, and that the most original work can only come from the imagination of skilled artists.

For more info about my music please visit: michellenelson.com.au