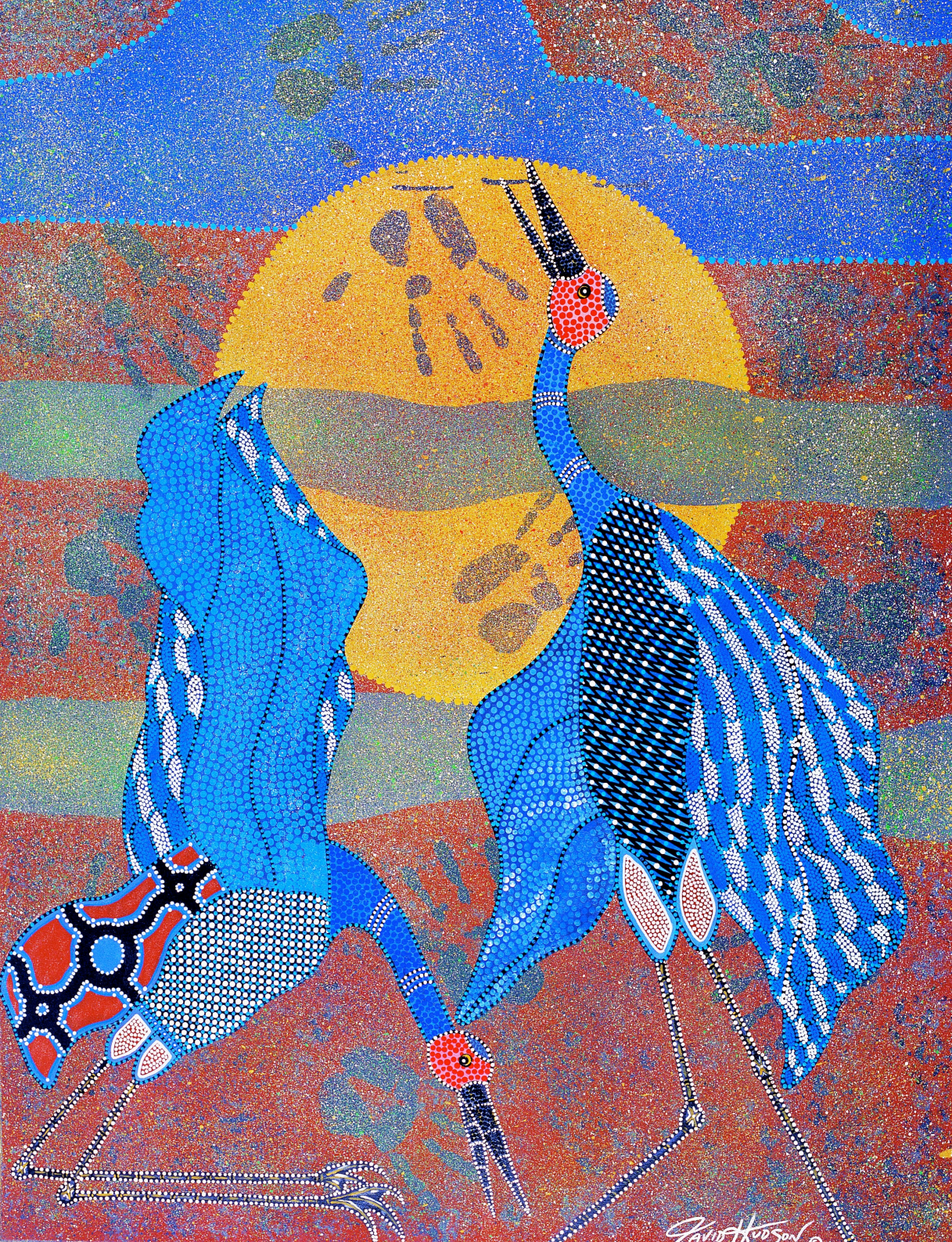




# *Brolga Dances*

*Contemporary Australian Music  
for Mandolin & Guitar*

*Melbourne  
Mandolin  
Orchestra*



# Brolga Dances

*Contemporary Australian Music for Mandolin & Guitar*

MICHELLE NELSON

- 1** **Pacifica** 7'06  
*percussionist* **AMY VALENT**

RICHARD CHARLTON

- 2** **Dances for the Mandolin and the Moon** 4'57

PETER SCULTHORPE

**Little Suite for Strings** (arranged by Michelle Nelson)

- 3** Sea Chant 2'15  
**4** Little Serenade 1'59  
**5** Left Bank Waltz 3'06

ROBERT SCHULZ

- 6** **Outback** 10'58

MICHELLE NELSON

**Brolga Dances**

*soloists* **JILL JOHNSON** mandolin and **MICHELLE NELSON** guitar

- 7** Introduction - Largo 2'32  
**8** Brolga's Dance 3'11  
**9** Agitato 1'19  
**10** Brolga Dances 4'23

MICHELLE NELSON

**Capricorn Light for Flute and Mandolin & Guitar Orchestra**

*soloist* **JULIE DANAHER** flute

- 11** Capricorn Light 3'09  
**12** Dances On Water 2'59

BETTY BEATH

- 13** **Mikri Thalassa** 6'15

CAROLINE SZETO

- 14** **Stringing** 7'15

*Melbourne Mandolin Orchestra*



# Brolga Dances



Australian composers have achieved worldwide recognition for quite some time but it is only in the past few decades that they have discovered the mandolin and guitar ensemble! Of course, they have needed some motivation to compose for this relatively unfamiliar type of ensemble. Those composers who also play in or conduct mandolin and guitar ensembles are already aware of the need for new compositions to whet the musical appetites of players and audience alike and the compositions on this recording have been written out of a dedication to this style of music.

To provide a financial stimulus to a greater number of composers, FAME, the Federation of Australasian Mandolin Ensembles, has for some time commissioned new compositions for its Mandolin Festivals, held every 18 months in various capital cities around Australia and New Zealand. Some of these commissioned works are represented on this CD. In addition, the Australian Mandolin Music Association has recently been established to commission new music on a regular basis to add further to the repertoire for mandolin & guitar ensemble. This recording is a celebration of the wonderful talent of Australian composers!

Mandolin orchestras have a format resembling the standard string quartet with first and second mandolin sections. The larger and therefore lower-pitched mandolas are tuned either a fifth lower than mandolins and thus mimic the tuning of the the viola, or a full octave lower. The mandoloncello, larger again with a still deeper pitch, corresponds to the cello of the standard string quartet. Classical guitars and double basses help to round off the sound with the lower registers and often provide the orchestra's rhythmic support.

The **Melbourne Mandolin Orchestra**, first formed in 1967 by the efforts of Peter Evans and founding conductor Josef Ruecker, has charmed audiences throughout Australia with its unique sound for the past 40 years. It has toured in Europe and Japan on several occasions and won several first prizes at the inaugural International Mandolin Orchestra Competition in Eupen, Belgium in 1993. It has recorded an LP and 3 albums prior to the release of this recording, all through Move Records.

The Melbourne Mandolin Orchestra has adhered to a long-standing requirement that its players play exclusively on Neapolitan-

style mandolins rather than the flat-back style of mandolin. Neapolitan mandolins have beautiful almond-shaped bodies which are thought to augment the lower pitched notes, a characteristic thought to be essential to the production of the sweeter sound attributed to this style of instrument.

In recent years the Melbourne Mandolin Orchestra has increasingly turned its attention to new compositions, particularly those written by Australian composers although it will never entirely abandon the more traditional mandolin music from its European origin. It is truly fortunate to have within its ranks a talented composer and guitarist, Michelle Nelson, and has been able to premier her compositions to enthralled audiences! The West Australian Mandolin Orchestra, WAMO, is similarly blessed with its conductor/composer, Robert Schulz, who has contributed many fine works for the mandolin orchestra repertoire over the past three decades.

The orchestra maintains a website from within which it is possible to learn about its players and past and forthcoming concerts. **[www.melbournemandolinorchestra.com/](http://www.melbournemandolinorchestra.com/)**

# Composers & Music



**Michelle Nelson** is a professional musician with a busy schedule that includes composing, performing, and teaching. Michelle has been a driving force behind this CD, motivated by the belief that it is essential for contemporary classic

composers to be heard so that the culture of 'here and now' can thrive and develop.

**Brolga Dances** - the Australian Aborigines' rich collective cultural history includes many creation myths that form a significant part of what is known as 'the Dreamtime'. The story of the Brolga, in which the heroine, a beautiful dancer, was abducted by an evil spirit but eventually returned in the form of a graceful dancing bird, was a picture-book childhood favourite of the composer. Years later, upon re-discovering it, she was moved to create a musical work based on it. This work was commissioned by FAME for the 2006 European tour.

**Capricorn Light** - the Australian landscape, coastline and distinctive light have long been a source of inspiration for the composer. This is one of a number of her works that she refers to as 'summer music'. Capricorn Light was inspired by a visit to the beautiful Capricornia coastal area of Queensland. Sailing across the clear waters from Yepoon to Great Keppel Island on a summer morning provided the inspiration here. The work is in two movements which represent the stillness of the dawn followed by the brilliance of the early-morn sunlight dancing on the water.

**Pacifica** - starts with the sound of gentle waves lapping on the shore and then takes off into blue-water sailing before finally returning to where it began. The chorus-like theme is inspired by the singing style of the Polynesian peoples. This work was commissioned by FAME for the 2008 Sydney International Mandolin Festival.



**Robert Schulz** is a guitarist, mandolinist, pianist, teacher composer, and conductor. In 1976 he founded the West Australian Mandolin Orchestra and is its present conductor. Many of his works have been recorded by orchestras in Europe,

America and Australia.

**Outback** - the vast expanse of the Australian Outback has inspired artists of all disciplines, and from a myriad of cultural backgrounds, for thousands of years. The inspiration for this music came to Robert one evening as he walked a great distance trying to find help after his car ran out of fuel, the great sense of emptiness of the land and the endless starlit sky providing plenty to stimulate musical thought!





**Betty Beath** is a composer, pianist and educator; formerly she was head of music at St Margaret's Girls' School in Brisbane and a lecturer at the Queensland Conservatorium of Music at Griffith University. She has produced a wealth of art songs, orchestral, chamber and instrumental music.

**Mikra Thalassa** - In a similar way that Pacifica and Capricorn Light invoke the Pacific Ocean this piece references the Greek Islands, a place with which many Australians feel a natural affinity. It was inspired by a sad song of the sea and sponge-fishers from the island of Kalymnos in the Dodecanese.



**Caroline Szeto** has won many awards since studying composition at the University of Sydney with Eric Gross and Peter Sculthorpe. Her music has been performed by leading orchestras, ensembles and soloists.

**Stringing** - was a commission by FAME for the 2008 Sydney International Mandolin Festival; its title refers to two aspects of the work - the gathering of, or uniting, a group of stringed instruments and the threading together of the various strands which emerge from the individual parts. It creates a great sense of rhythmic urgency which drives the piece forwards. An audience favourite!



**Peter Sculthorpe** AO, OBE was born in Launceston and began writing music at the age of seven. He is one of Australia's most awarded and esteemed composers with a prolific output of orchestral, chamber and instrumental music, and music for film & television.

**Little Suite** - a popular work for bowed strings, this arrangement for mandolin and guitar ensemble was created by Michelle Nelson for the MMO.

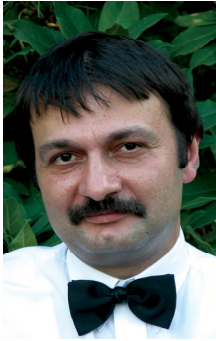


**Richard Charlton's** music features on more than 30 CDs with performances by many leading Australian and international musicians. He is recognised as one of Australia's leading guitarist/composers. In 2004 he won the "Instrumental Work of the Year" award at the APRA/AMC Classical Music Awards for his quartet "Stoneworks". Richard presently performs with the Sydney Guitar Trio and is the Director of Performance at Ascham School in Sydney.

**Dances for the Mandolin and the Moon** - a bright and energetic work that combines contemporary rhythms to create a very modern sound for plucked-strings. This work was commissioned by FAME for the 2006 European Tour of the Australian Mandolin Orchestra and has since been performed by orchestras worldwide.



# Conductor & Soloists



**Conductor - Slava Iourgaev** came to Australia in 1994 from Uzbekistan where he obtained his Master's degree ('92) in 'cello from the Tashkent Conservatorium studying with Professor Vladimir Chakhvadze. Slava has been performing with several orchestras in Melbourne, and now teaches at schools and is a member of the string quartet "Unique". In addition he performs regularly with pianist Victoria Bilogan as "Mobius Duo". Slava has performed many times as a soloist on cello with the MMO over the past few years and has been very popular in his current role as the MMO's conductor.

**Flute - Julie Danaher** is a freelance musician in and around Melbourne. She has played as Principal Flute with a number of orchestras including the Stonnington Symphony Orchestra, Melbourne City Opera, Melbourne Opera and Heidelberg Symphony Orchestra as well as a number of other musical ensembles. Julie is a well-respected teacher and examiner in Victoria and has taught at a number of schools around Melbourne. Julie is currently Head of Woodwind at Genazzano College where she teaches flute and also directs several instrumental ensembles.



**Mandolin - Jill Johnson** has been a player with the Melbourne Mandolin Orchestra for many years and has been its Leader for nearly a decade. She was a member of the renowned I Mandolini trio during its heyday. She served for many years as a member of the orchestra's committee of management and as President of the MMO. Currently she is the Leader of the Second Mandolin Section and Music Librarian.

**Guitar - Michelle Nelson** has been mentioned earlier in these notes primarily as a composer. However she is also a talented guitarist and teaches guitar at Carey Grammar School in Melbourne as well as running her own guitar school. She performs regularly with small chamber groups.



RECORDING, EDITING AND MIXING AT MOVE RECORDS BY MARTIN WRIGHT AND VAUGHAN MCALLEY WITH POST-PRODUCTION MUSICAL SUPERVISION BY SLAVA IOURGAEV, MICHELLE NELSON AND JOAN HARRIS. GRAPHIC DESIGN AND SLEEVE NOTES BY DANNY SILVER. BEAUTIFUL COVER ARTWORK BY INDIGENOUS ARTIST DAVID HUDSON. RARE PHOTO OF BROLGAS WAS TAKEN NEAR CRESSY, VICTORIA BY ANDREW SKEOCH.



# *The Melbourne Mandolin Orchestra*

**Conductor:** **Slava Iourgaev**

**First Mandolin:** **Joan Harris**  
Roberta Condie  
Mary Ebinger  
Kurt Jensen  
Ina Postuma  
Joan Roberts

**Second Mandolin:** **Jill Johnson**  
Saschar Amos  
Jinette de Gooijer  
George Mitchell  
Takashi Nakatani  
Michelle Wright

**Double Bass:** **Tony Hofmann**

**Mandola:** **Darryl Barron**  
Ray Kerslake  
Danny Silver

**Guitar:** **Michelle Nelson**  
Donna Amenta  
Barbara Gartner  
Jacqui Mariz  
Martin Murphy  
Derek Mortimer  
Brian Quinn  
Chris Trenwith

**Mandolncello:** **Abram Iourgaev**  
Adam Tate

