

Concordia

Mandolin & Guitar Ensemble

in concert at the

Corinella Community Hall

48 Smythe Street, Corinella

Saturday 23rd August 2025 at 2:00pm

presents

Strings by the Sea



Musical Directors:

Juliette Maxwell and Basil Hawkins

Soloists:

Michelle Nelson (Guitar), Holly Brick (Mandola) and Katie Maxwell-Hawkins (Soprano)

Our Program

Granada *

Isaac Albéniz (arr. J. Woods)

Reverie

Eileen Pakenham *

Chanson de Matin

Edward Elgar (arr. B. Hawkins)

Recuerdos de la Alhambra *

Francisco Tárrega

Here, There and Everywhere / Michelle

John Lennon and Paul McCartney

Midsummer Bagatelles *

Michelle Nelson *

- a Foggy Morn
- Strawberry Fair
- Bullocks may graze safely
- a Midsummer Dance
- Midsummer Nocturn

Il melograno

Manos Hadjidakis (arr. F. Witt)

Romanze

Théodore Ritter (Holly Brick - Mandola)

Interval

Concerto for Lute in D Major

Antonio Vivaldi (Michelle Nelson - Guitar)

- Allegro giusto
- Largo
- Allegro

The Godfather Suite

Nino Rota (arr. S. Prophet)

- The Godfather Waltz
- Theme I
- Tarantella
- Theme II

After the Fire ... Harmony Returns *

Michelle Nelson

- Incinerat
- After the Fire

Once Upon a December (Anastasia)

Stephen Flaherty (Katie Maxwell- Hawkins - Soprano)

Too Much Heaven

The Bee Gees (arr. H. Boyde)

Rumba

Dieter Kreidler

Hungarian Journey

François Menichetti

* You can read about these works and composers in the **Program Notes** below

Our Players

Musical Directors

Juliette Maxwell and Basil Hawkins

First Mandolins

Marion Blazé (Leader), Mujgan Tamer, Evan Webb and Raymond Mizzi

Second Mandolins

Jenny Whittam, Margaret O'Donnell and Celia Doncon

Mandolas

Holly Brick, Joan Harris and Christina Pavlidis

Guitars

Michelle Nelson, Carol Robinson, Rowan Lucas and Terry Killen

Double Bass

Bruce Packard

Soloists

Michelle Nelson – Guitar, Holly Brick - Mandola and Katie Maxwell-Hawkins – Soprano

Our Leaders and Soloists

Musical Director - Juliette Maxwell



Originally from England, **Juliette Maxwell** began learning the accordion at the age of eight. Initially self-taught, Juliette drew her inspiration from her mother, who was also an accomplished musician. Since joining Concordia in 1994, Juliette has played the accordion, the double bass and percussion. Juliette has been a soloist for the **Melbourne Mandolin Orchestra** and was its guest conductor its most recent concert. Juliette has performed in the stage show *Fiddler on the Roof* (featuring Topol) at Melbourne's Regent Theatre. Juliette has considerable experience as a conductor, including the musicals *My Fair Lady* and *Les Misérables*.

Ensemble Leader - Marion Blazé



Marion Blazé joined Concordia in 2015 and has been its leader since 2017. Marion began playing mandolin with the Melbourne Mandolin Orchestra and was a member of its 50th Anniversary European tour in 2018. Marion played with **La Serenata**, a small mandolin and guitar ensemble which regularly brought the joy of mandolin music to those living in retirement homes who were unable to attend concerts. Marion is very active in the mandolin world, being the president of Concordia and the acting president of Mandolins Victoria.

Emeritus Conductor - Basil Hawkins



Basil Hawkins has been Concordia's musical director since 1989. Born in India, Basil was awarded a scholarship to the Calcutta School of Music by the age of 16, studying with visiting professors Jean and Kenneth Wentworth from New York's Julliard School of Music. He studied at the Melbourne Conservatorium of Music, where he was awarded degrees in teaching, performance and conducting. Basil has been involved in music education for many years, teaching violin and piano. Basil is best known for his work in conducting musicals, light opera and orchestras.

Guitar Leader, Resident Composer and Guitar Soloist



Michelle Nelson is a Melbourne based guitarist, composer and creative educator. She was the guitar section leader for the Melbourne Mandolin Orchestra from 2001 to 2010 and joined Concordia in 2013. Michelle's compositions for plucked stringed instruments blend contemporary with traditional practices and attract regular airplay and performances in Australia, Europe and the UK. Michelle's composition *Midsummer Bagatelles*, was performed by the Moonlight Mandolin Orchestra in Cambridge, England in 2015.

Holly Brick - Mandola



Holly Brick was raised in Sydney, where she began her musical studies on the guitar. Upon relocating to Melbourne, she commenced learning mandolin with the Concordia training orchestra in 2003. Since that time, Holly has been actively playing both the mandolin and mandola with Mandolins D'amour and Concordia. Holly is a music educator and she also dedicates her time to volunteering in aged care facilities, conducting music programmes for individuals living with dementia. Holly is a sought-after bass player in the Melbourne jazz and soul scene, frequently performing with groups such as the Women of Soul Collective, Joys Jambi and the Melba Big Band, with a notable recent performance at the Byron Bay Bluesfest.

Katie Maxwell-Hawkins - Soprano



Born into a musical family, **Katie Maxwell-Hawkins** was just five when she joined the Australian Girls Choir. At the age of ten she was promoted to its Senior Performance Group, *Camerata*, where she opened a number solo during a choir performance at Robert Blackwood Hall, Monash University. Katie has played the role of Alice in her primary school's musical *Alice in Wonderland* and more recently, the role of Lydia in *Beetlejuice the Musical*, winning the best actress award at Blackburn High. Katie loves singing, acting and playing the piano. She looks forward to taking her artistic talents to greater heights.

Program Notes

Midsummer Bagatelles

Michelle Nelson 2014

Homage a Eileen Pakenham

Midsummer Bagatelles is a suite of five character pieces for plucked-string orchestra. Composed by Michelle Nelson in 2014, it was inspired by an extended stay in Cambridge, UK close by the River Cam and the Midsummer Common. The work pays homage to **Eileen Pakenham**, who wrote several highly regarded works for plucked-strings ensemble. Her beautiful orchestral style inspired this work. These five pieces have titles that reflect the land and the social use of the Common flanking the River Cam as it winds its way into the heart of the old town and university precinct.

a Foggy Morn' paints the image of the still, foggy air that hangs above the ground early on a cold morning, the river flowing quietly underneath.

Strawberry Fair is a popular local festival held on the Midsummer Common in June of each year.

Bullocks may graze safely to this day, on the part of Midsummer Common in which residents of the town may keep cows and sheep, just as in bygone centuries!

a Midsummer Dance is a lively jig reflecting the traditional folk dancing of the UK. To our delight and surprise, it became a hit on ABC Classic FM in 2017-20. Being a snappy 1'25 duration made it a perfect filler track for ABC programmers. You may well have heard it leading up to the morning news!

Midsummer Nocturne is the 'good night' finale that reflects on the previous pieces and adds a late-night neighbourhood lutenist (a Cambridge friend of the composer with a habit of playing lute late in the evening!). The referenced tune is by the 16th Century lutenist John Dowland and the solo guitarist should aim to project a lute-style sound in this section.

Midsummer Bagatelles was dedicated to the Moonlight Mandolin Orchestra of Cambridge and was first performed by them in 2015. It was first recorded, in Australia by Concordia for their 2016 album *Ringling the Strings* [Move MCD 557], which is available on CD, streamed through Apple Music by clicking [here](#) or purchased at the iTunes Store.

After The Fire ... Harmony Returns Michelle Nelson 2009

Devastation by Nature; strangely beautiful. Charred and blackened tree trunks against a bright, azure sky. Brilliant shoots of fresh greenery sprouting all around. Little by little, bit-by-bit the emerging rhythm and harmony of their growth will re-paint this scene but the scars of the fire will remain for decades.

The original 2012 recording of *After the Fire*, performed by Concordia and conducted by Basil Hawkins, was released on Michelle Nelson's *After the Fire* album through Move Records in 2013 [Move MCD492]. A new version of it is available on Concordia's album *Eclipse* [Move MCD 612] that features a lengthened opening section as a standalone movement titled *Incinerat*. The electro-acoustic elements of this new track make it difficult to include in live performance. The second movement is the familiar *After the Fire* that has been popular with concert audiences in both Australia and the United Kingdom.

Eileen Pakenham (1914 – 2009)



Eileen Pakenham (pictured) was the daughter Oscar Faber OBE and Helen Mainwaring. Her family were keen amateur artists and musicians. Eileen became a proficient pianist and trained as a teacher. In 1938, she spent time as a teacher and missionary in Uganda and in 1947 as a land agent in Zanzibar, she married the diplomat Richard Pakenham CBE and had two sons. When her sons started playing the guitar, she took up playing the mandolin. In 1978, she joined the London Mandolin Ensemble for which Eileen composed several mandolin orchestral works. As a composer she always remained an amateur, never formally copyrighting her work, but she received much acclaim both locally and internationally as a composer for the mandolin. Her works have been used for examination pieces and are performed by groups worldwide. She was even mentioned by Alfred Einstein in his book *Greatness in Music*. Eileen's music is quite distinctive in style - typically English of the 1930s, but always with a flavour that is distinctly Eileen Pakenham.

Granada - Isaac Albéniz (1860-1909)



Originally written for piano by **Isaac Albéniz** (pictured), **Granada** is the opening piece from his 1886 work *Suite Española No. 1* (Op. 47). It has become one of the most beloved pieces in the Spanish repertoire. Granada paints a romanticized vision of Andalusian charm, filled with longing and beauty and is often associated with the Moorish heritage of Alhambra, the famous palace-fortress of Granada, known for its mystical gardens, intricate Islamic architecture, and timeless history. Since being transcribed for guitar by Miguel Llobet, it has become one of the most important works of the classical guitar repertoire,

having been recorded by guitarists such as Julian Bream, Andrés Segovia and John Williams. Granada's flowing melody and evocative harmonies make it a timeless musical postcard of Spain's deep cultural heritage.

Recuerdos de la Alhambra - Francisco Tárrega (1852 – 1909)



The Alhambra Palace

Recuerdos de la Alhambra (Memories of the Alhambra) is a classical guitar piece composed by iconic Spanish composer and guitarist **Francisco Tárrega** in 1899 and is dedicated to his patron, Concepción Gómez de Jacoby. The piece conveys the impression of flowing water, shimmering light, and the Moorish grandeur of the palace, all through the delicate interplay of notes that swirl and cascade, much like the fountains and courtyards of the Alhambra itself. The Alhambra has long been a source of inspiration for artists, poets, and musicians. Its stunning Islamic architecture, lush gardens, and panoramic views of the Sierra Nevada mountains have made it a symbol of Moorish Spain's cultural legacy. **Recuerdos de la Alhambra** captures the essence of this magical place, transporting listeners to a world of beauty and mystery. Tárrega composed during the Romantic period, which one can hear in his swooping, melancholy melodies that seem to just 'sing' with passionate emotion, longing, and at times, tragedy.

Discography

Eclipse (2022)



Commenced in 2018 and intended for release in 2020, this album was eclipsed by the pandemic. All works presented on this album are composed by Michelle Nelson. *Eclipse* was first performed in 2015 at Malvern Town Hall to a large appreciative audience. *Bishops Spell* was commissioned by our leader Marion Blazé (née Bishop) in memory of her parents, Ida and Frank. This album features dazzling solo performances by Will Hardy (recorder) and Darryl Barron (mandola).

Ring the Strings (2016)



This album boasts music by Peter Sculthorpe, Gabriel Fauré, Stephen Lalor, Erik Satie, François Menichetti and the ensemble's own Michelle Nelson.

Here is a good deal of easy listening, the works selected for their charm and felicitous adaptability to the mandolin/guitar forces available. While there are no Schoenbergian shocks, this CD is amiably honest in its prime intention of entertaining. Clive O'Connell, O'Connell the Music

Flight (2005)



Flight draws on the virtuosic, lively and passionate items in the ensemble's repertoire. The idea of flight is evoked in the choice of many of the pieces, notably *The flight of the bumble bee* and *The witches*. With their energy and vitality, the other pieces in one way or another, echo the rapture of flights of fancy. This album features inspiring solos by Kurt Jensen, Juliette Maxwell and Petra Laity.

Forgotten Dreams (2002)



Concordia's musical director, Basil Hawkins, first came across *The waltz of forgotten dreams* by Manos Hadjidakis in 1999 and was struck by its atmospheric and evocative nature. In keeping with this nostalgic ambience, this album includes pieces such as Eileen Pakenham's *Reverie*, *Sakura* and Fred Witt's *Memories of Bendigo*. Kurt Jensen delivers a masterful mandola solo in Ritter's *Romanze*.

Eclectic Collection (1998)



The mandolin orchestra is versatile both in its own right and as an accompanying ensemble. The Eclectic Collection demonstrates this diversity and distinctive character. Its works range from the Baroque period to more contemporary, and features wonderful solo performances of voice, clarinet, accordion, cello, shakuhachi, flute, oboe and mandolin.

Salut d'Amour (1996)



Concordia's maiden recording features an atmospheric and distinctively beautiful collection of pieces arranged for mandolin orchestra. This album includes works by Wolke, Mozart, Elgar, Dunnebeil and Witt and features soprano Irena Grainge, flautist Petra Webb and accordionist Juliette Maxwell.

About Concordia

The Mandolin Orchestra

Mandolin orchestras have existed in Australia since the beginning of the 20th century. There are currently eight mandolin orchestras in Australia, with Melbourne boasting three of them, namely the *Melbourne Mandolin Orchestra*, *Concordia* and *Mandolins D'Amour*. A mandolin orchestra is an ensemble of plucked string instruments, similar in structure to the string sections of a symphony orchestra. There are the first and second mandolin sections (like the first and second violins), a mandola section (like the violas), classical guitars and a double bass. Many such orchestras may also include percussion and instruments such as the accordion, woodwind and brass. Mandolin orchestras enjoy popularity in Australia, Europe, USA, Canada, New Zealand, Japan and the United Kingdom.



The Mandolin and Mandola

The *mandolin* is a fretted steel stringed instrument, which evolved in the 18th century from the Italian mandora, a type of lute. It has the same tuning as a violin and is played with a plectrum. The *mandola* is similar to the mandolin, but tuned an octave lower. If you are a violinist and are interested in playing the mandolin, please let us know.



Concordia is a dedicated plucked-strings chamber orchestra based in East Malvern. Formed in 1978, its first conductor was prominent Melbourne guitarist John Griffiths. Concordia has performed hundreds of concerts in Melbourne and regional Victoria. We have toured in Italy in 1984, performing in cities such as Rome, Florence, and Milan. Concordia's repertoire ranges from Baroque to Romantic to contemporary and original Australian works. For more information about Concordia, please check out our new website at concordiamandolins.org.au or scan the QR code.



You can also follow us on Facebook at [concordiamandolins](https://www.facebook.com/concordiamandolins).

Become a Friend of Concordia

If you would like to receive regular information about our concert schedules and recordings, please sign up as a **Friend of Concordia** on our website. We welcome new players, so if you would like to find out more, please talk to us after the concert or contact our president **Marion Blazé** at:

president@concordiamandolins.org.au.