

MANDOLINS CELEBRATING Q150

For those who like a concert with an historical flavour, there's no better place to be on Saturday, July 11th than St John's Cathedral, Ann Street, Brisbane.

Sponsored by the Queensland Government and by the Federation of Australasian Mandolin Ensembles, the largest group of mandolin, mandola, mandocello, guitar and double bass players Brisbane has ever seen will gather to celebrate Queensland's 150th anniversary since separation from New South Wales.

Each item in the carefully crafted programme tells part of Queensland's story, so this is a history lesson set to music. From the arrival of Dutch explorers in 1606 and the volatile relationship between settlers and indigenous people, to the bankrupt nature of Queensland's finances on secession, everything is told through music. Tribute is paid to the valuable contribution towards the building of Queensland of various immigrant groups - German, Irish, and Italian – in music from Baumann, Harris and Vivaldi. Music by Keith Harris honours Lady Diamantina Bowen, the Greek wife of Queensland's first Governor, for her tremendous work for the underprivileged.

Three new works will be premiered. They are by Christopher Sainsbury (performer, composer and leader in the field of notation); Christopher Andrews (former oboist with the Queensland Symphony Orchestra and conductor of one of the Queensland Youth Orchestras); and Stephen Lalor (plucked strings specialist and Sydney Symphony soloist).

To do justice to such music, conductor Keith Harris (Heidelberg University) takes charge. With a career starting at London's Wigmore Hall, he has written books on mandolin technique, recorded a CD and taught as well as performed world-wide. He is aided by Brisbane's Nathan Aspinall, conductor of Mandolins in Brisbane.

The line-up of other performers is likewise impressive. Orchestra leader, Sue Flower, made her professional debut at London's Royal Opera House, Covent Garden, and has played for most of the UK's major orchestras, as well as making recordings for radio, TV and disc.

Mandola leader, Stephen Lalor (see above), appears often at the Sydney Opera House. Double bass player, Tony Hofmann (ex-Melbourne Symphony Orchestra) and mandolinist, Jill Johnson (co-founder of trio 'i mandolini' which toured Japan and Europe) lend their considerable skills, as well as Australia's youngest mandolin soloist, Marissa Carroll.

Guitar leader is Catherine Neylan, teacher at Brisbane's All Hallows School and Mount St Michael's College, known for her ensemble work. Player and maker of didgeridoos, Stephen Bond, of Brisbane's City Hall and Woodford Folk Festival fame, appears also.

Presented by Radio Station 4MBS's Gary Thorpe and also recorded by 4MBS, this event is a rare chance to see a mandolin orchestra of such size and quality.

There is wheelchair access to the cathedral and parking across the street at the Kings Cathedral Square Car Park at a cost of \$7 for the evening.

Tickets - \$28, concession \$25 (includes Friends of Mandolins In Brisbane and 4MBS subscribers), children under 12 free - are available through 4MBS (phone 3847 1717) or by visiting www.4mbs.com.au.