

IMAS-Newsletter

No. 2 / 2026



INTERNATIONAL
MANDOLIN SOCIETY

Mandolin meets accordion

Since 2008, Germany's state music councils have jointly selected a musical instrument each year to be the "Instrument of the Year." The initiative aims to bring a specific instrument into the public spotlight. The accordion has been chosen as the "Instrument of the Year" for 2026. The goal is to raise general awareness of its versatility and potential — as an instrument for education, concerts, and culture — and to showcase the accordion in all its facets.



In this context, IMAS has researched existing compositions for these unusual instrumental combinations:

- > Duo: mandolin and accordion
- > Trio: 2 mandolins and accordion
- > Trio: mandolin, guitar and accordion
- > Accordion and mandolin quartet
- > Accordion and mandolin orchestra
- > Variable ensembles featuring mandolin and accordion

In total, more than 200 works were gathered; these will be published in a small brochure towards the end of 2026. Wherever the relevant details could be ascertained, the compilation includes the following information:

- > Composer's name and dates of birth and death
- > Title of the composition
- > Exact instrumentation
- > Total duration
- > Publisher or manuscript status

What does FEGIP stand for?

The Spanish Federation of Guitar and Plectrum Instrument Associations (FEGIP) is an organization founded 1997, by amateur and professional musicians specializing in the guitar and plectrum instruments — such as bandurrias, mandolins, and all instruments within that family.

It has 105 members, comprising 61 plectrum and guitar orchestras, 38 individual members, and 6 honorary members.

Among other activities, the organization is dedicated to preserving musical heritage through the publication of historical scores. It promotes events, concerts, and festivals. Furthermore, it publishes research papers and the journal *ALZAPÚA*, which covers history, pedagogy, research, performance practice, and information regarding plectrum instruments, classical guitar, and flamenco guitar.

It provides advice to its members and advocates for the implementation of specialized study programs for plucked string instruments at Spanish conservatories.

CD „Caterina Lichtenberg, Mike Marshall & Friends“

Adventure Music Label. Available from: New Acoustic Gallery, Oliver Waitze, Schloss Lüntenbeck, 42327 Wuppertal, Germany, www.n-a-g.info, Phone: +49 0202/ 94672730. All tracks can also be purchased as downloads on Mike Marshall's Bandcamp page: [mikemarshall5.Bandcamp.com](https://mikemarshall5.bandcamp.com).

The new CD from these two exceptional mandolinists — in which they once again expressively showcase their intricate playing — was released as early as May 2025. The program is multifaceted, curated with great interest, and demonstrates impressive stylistic breadth. It offers insights into widely varied compositional approaches and features striking examples of a rich, diverse musical language that gives expression to emotion, intellect, and dreams.

"Milou de Paname" by Gaston Durand is a classic of the French musette tradition; accordionist Filippo Gambetta blends in elegantly, paying tribute to the "Instrument of the Year 2026" with the piece's catchy, spirited melodic lines. "El Diabolo Suelto" by Heraclio Fernández (1851–1886) is a *joropo*, a genre characteristic of the lively Colombian-Venezuelan music and dance style; here, Alejandro Villegas Mazo provides a

sonorous foundation for the melody-carrying instruments on his electric bass. "Schwebii!" was composed by Mike Marshall, who drew inspiration from the Wuppertal Suspension Railway (*Schwebbahn*) to create a piece with a cheerful, graceful character. With "Light Mountain," composer Mike Marshall alludes to his wife's name; the piece was written for Mrs. Light Mountain (Lichten-Berg). Here, the mandolncello provides an effective counterpoint to the virtuosic mandolin part, while young bassist Lucas Henri adds his own bass line to the duet, introducing an exciting new element.

"Sensivel" is a classic by the great Brazilian choro composer Pixinguinha, performed by the artists with captivating emotion. Clarinetist Andy Connell blends perfectly with the sound created by Caterina and Mike. "Krivo Horo" is a traditional Bulgarian folk dance; with its 11/16 time signature, it is rhythmically complex and fast-paced, featuring colorful percussion accompaniment by Brian Rice. The piece "La Futemberg-Variationen"—in which Nathan Bontrager doubles the mandolncello part on the viola da gamba, likely a first of its kind—offers ample scope for tonal nuance and musical shaping.

Mandolin duets from Naples by Raffaele Calace (1863–1934) are featured: *Allegro grazioso* (Op. 96), *Andante* (Op. 97), and *Allegretto scherzando*. Caterina and Mike perform these duets expressively in their original versions, allowing Caterina's exceptional feel for the Italian mandolin tradition to shine through. American composer Chris Acquavella (b. 1975) wrote the piece "Rushtick Charmers" for mandolin and mandocello specifically for the duo Caterina & Mike. It is a hybrid work that draws upon the composer's experiences in a punk band, his exploration of the rhythmic intricacies of Balkan music, his fondness for bluegrass, and—not least—the British tradition of classical mandolin music, which he studied under Alison Stevens in London. It is a rhythmically demanding piece with a propulsive drive, featuring beautiful interplay between the mandolin and mandocello as well as sophisticated sonic effects.

The program concludes with the Duo for Violin and Viola, K. 423, by Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart (1756–1791), recorded here in a version for mandolin and American mandola—the latter tuned like a viola (CGDA). This approach faithfully reproduces Mozart's original score, ensuring the piece retains its cheerful, sensitive character while being presented in a particularly delightful performance.

In summary, it is evident that Caterina Lichtenberg and Mike Marshall form an exceptionally fine duo, unrivaled in terms of sound quality, perfect interplay, and artistic expressiveness on plucked instruments. As Caterina's ideal partner, Mike is a true virtuoso; his mandolncello lends a touch of excellence to their joint performances. The guest musicians prove to be outstanding masters of their craft, complementing the works with their own distinctive artistic touches.

With this CD, the duo Caterina Lichtenberg & Mike Marshall has created a magnificent calling card that breaks new ground in terms of musical character; thanks to its high-quality repertoire and excellent recording, it offers fresh inspiration, sets new accents within the German-speaking cultural sphere, and is certain to garner significant international attention. (rbg)



Interesting Facts About Raffaele Calace (1863–1934)

Raffaele Calace was an Italian mandolinist, composer, and instrument maker. He was born in Naples, the son of the successful instrument maker Antonio Calace. Initially trained as a musician, he discovered the mandolin and soon became a virtuoso.

After graduating with honors from the Regio Conservatorio di Musica in Naples, he dedicated himself to elevating the status of the mandolin in the musical world. To this end, he toured Europe and Japan, performing on the Neapolitan mandolin and the *liuto cantabile*. The *liuto cantabile* is a bass instrument in the mandolin family; musicologists believe it was developed by Neapolitan instrument makers of the Vinaccia family during the final decade of the 19th century and later perfected by Raffaele Calace.

Calace recorded three LPs on which he played the mandolin and *liuto cantabile*. He composed approximately 200 works for the mandolin. These include concert works for solo mandolin as well as compositions for mandolin and other instruments: duets with piano, trios with mandola and guitar, the Romantic mandolin quartet (two mandolins, mandola, and guitar), and quintets.

Calace also authored pedagogical works, including a mandolin method and a method for the *liuto cantabile*. The mandolin method was published in 1910 and builds upon 18th-century Italian mandolin treatises by Giovanni Battista Gervasio (c. 1725–c. 1785), Gabriele Leone (c. 1725–c. 1790), and others. It illustrates the evolution of the traditional Italian playing style.

The Calace school bridges the gap between other modern mandolin methods — such as those of Raffaele Calace's compatriot Silvio Ranieri (1882–1956), a Roman virtuoso who settled in Brussels, and the American-based Italian mandolinist Giuseppe Pettine (1874–1966). (rbg)

Cremona Mandolini in Mostra (Italy)

Octobre 2-4, 2026

Contents: The Mandolin at the Cremona Musica Expo and Festival International Music Fair: concerts, show case, conferences, exhibitions, masterclasses, ... See poster.



The exclusive presence of the MILWAUKEE MANDOLIN ORCHESTRA, from the United States, the only mandolin organisation in the world that can boast 125 years of uninterrupted activity, presently conducted by M^{re} René Izquierdo. The participation of the Czech mandolinist RADIM ZENKL, unmissable virtuoso of the popular mandolin, spanning from Balkan music to American bluegrass, Irish folk and prog experimentation. The prestigious event featuring the performance of the QUARTETTO ITALIANO A PIZZICO within the Gala Night on Friday 2nd October.

The highly appreciated MANDOLIN MASTERCLASS that Carlo Aonzo will offer on Sunday morning. There is also the opportunity for Ensembles/Orchestras to attend the most important Italian musical gathering through the participation in this MANDOLIN PERFORMANCES' SERIES, which represents a wonderful showcase for mandolin activities, as well as musical and teaching proposals

Informations about organizer etc.:

www.accademiamandolino.com/past.mandolin-guitar-accaademias

info@accademiamandolino.com

<https://cremonamusica.com/en/acoustic-guitar-village-2/>

The 13th ARTE International Mandolin Festival and Mandolin Competition in Osaka (Japan)

Octobre 10-11, 2026

The festival aims to provide new impetus to the mandolin scene in Japan through a series of concerts. The concurrently held competition for solo mandolin aims to foster exchange among young mandolin players worldwide. Alongside events in Schweinfurt (Germany) and Cremona (Italy), it ranks among the three most outstanding competitions in the international mandolin world.



The festival venue is: Kadoma Lumiere Hall

[\(https://npotoybox.jp/lumi/\)](https://npotoybox.jp/lumi/)

Festival organizer: ARTE MANDOLINISTICA (NPO), contact details:

Website: <https://www.arte-mandolin.com/en/>

Email: artekyoto@gmail.com

Fon: 090-1076-2589

Fax: 075-646-3655(FAX)

https://www.arte-mandolin.com/en/wp-content/uploads/sites/2/2025/10/13th_ARTE_International_Mandolin_Competition_Guidelines.pdf

Guitar & Mandolin Festival of University of Rhode Island (USA)

October 18–25, 2026

The Mandolin Program at the URI Guitar & Mandolin Festival is dedicated to advancing the artistry of the mandolin through world-class performance, education, and community engagement. Under the mandolin direction of Jacob Reuven, the program brings together internationally acclaimed performers, educators, students, and enthusiasts for an immersive week of concerts, masterclasses, chamber music, ensemble performance, lectures, and artistic collaboration. The program fosters artistic excellence while providing meaningful educational opportunities for participants of all ages and experience levels.

Venue: University of Rhode Island, Kingston, Rhode Island, USA.

Festival Offerings:

- o International guest artist concerts
- o Daily masterclasses

- o Private lessons with internationally recognized faculty
- o Chamber music coaching
- o Mandolin orchestra rehearsals and performances
- o Elite Mandolin Soloists Ensemble – an intensive performance ensemble designed for advanced collegiate, graduate, and emerging professional mandolinists pursuing careers as performers.
- o Mandolin Lovers Ensemble – a welcoming community ensemble for dedicated amateur players and mandolin enthusiasts seeking a collaborative musical experience.
- o Lectures and workshops
- o Luthier Exhibition featuring internationally respected instrument makers
- o Student recitals and showcase performances
- o Networking opportunities with performers, educators, composers, and luthiers

Participants may register as full participants or auditors, allowing musicians of all experience levels to engage in the festival. Auditors are welcome to attend concerts, observe masterclasses, lectures, workshops, rehearsals, and ensemble sessions, providing an immersive educational experience without participating in performance activities.

Website: www.URIGMFest.org

Email: adamlevin@uri.edu; **Phone:** 847-732-8058

Mexico Mandolin Retreat

February 24-28, 2027

Held at the La Gloria de Los Angeles holiday lodge on Lake Pátzcuaro in western Mexico, this internationally advertised workshop is led by Isaac Eicher in collaboration with Jake Howard. The workshop

workshop covers a broad spectrum of topics, including bluegrass, jazz, music theory, playing technique, and Latin American music. The unique feature of this workshop is that it unites a passion for mandolin playing with an interest in the Spanish language and local culture - including the culinary arts - all with a single event. \$ 1.550, which includes lodging, Food, classes and transportation to/from the airport. Contact details: www.isaaceichermusic.com

British BMG Federation Festival 2027

April 2-4, 2027

The British Banjo, Mandolin and Guitar Federation organizes its festival with the aim of providing an opportunity for plucked string players to perform, learn and connect with others. Venue: Churchill College, Cambridge



The Festival provides opportunities to attend workshops, to perform in contests, to listen to musicians playing plucked instruments to a high level, and to take part in a mass orchestra. As well as the organised activities the weekend venue provides opportunities for informal playing and for attendees to meet new friends and collaborators.

Workshops offer opportunities for learning and group activity and contests allow attendees to show their playing to a knowledgeable audience.

Contact Information:

E-mail: bmgfederation@gmail.com

Please title your email message Festival 2027.

Website: bbmg.org.uk

Venice Mandolin Festival 2027 (Italy)

May 1-9, 2027

The objectives of The Venice Mandolin Festival is to bring people together who loves to play the mandolin, mandola, guitar and other plucked instruments. To this end, two festival orchestras will be formed: the first under the direction of Maxime Rizzotto from May 1 to 5, 2027, and the second under the direction of Laura Engelmann from May 6 to 9, 2027.

We turn to regular mandolin orchestras with a conductor, who wants to conduct and perform his / her own program, for example Vivaldi's mandolin concertos or a free choice of repertory, with his / her own orchestra, in a concert in The Venice Mandolin Festival.

The organizers also arrange concerts in The Venice Mandolin Festival with a project mandolin orchestra consisting of individual mandolin, mandola and guitar players, small groups or merged orchestras.

Venues are Churches and palaces in historical Venice and at Lido di Venezia.

Write to, or call Lars Forslund at:

E-mail: mandolin@vivaldifestival.com

Whats up: + 46 736 32 87 44

Website: www.vivaldifestival.com/mandolin

Carlo Aonzo Mandolin Workshop in Nashville (USA) May 20-23, 2027

Contents: classical mandolin workshop in Nashville, Tennessee

Organizer: Carlo Aonzo

<https://www.carloaonzomandolinschool.com>

About Mandolin Music Library in Japan

Japan is one of the most popular countries in the world for mandolin music. Mandolin music in Japan is said to have been introduced in the early 1900s by Kenpachi Hiruma, an instructor at the Tokyo Music School at the time.

In 1915, Morishige Takei founded the Sinfonia Mandorini Orchestra, which not only performed mandolin music, but also published a researcher's journal and held competitions to promote mandolin music in Japan. Mandolin clubs were also established at various universities around this era, playing a major key role in the development of mandolin music activities.

In 1968, the Japan Mandolin Union was established, and it has contributed to the popularization of mandolin music by holding solo competitions and composition competitions, etc. In the 1970s, the Italian mandolin The period of prosperity was marked by arrangements of orchestral works by composers and the composition of new original works by Japanese composers. Although the number of student groups has been declining somewhat since then, a number of amateur groups have been established by university graduates.

In view of the fact that a large number of valuable materials and scores collected by enthusiasts in the course of these activities may have been lost due to family circumstances and other reasons, we felt keenly the need to take care of such valuable materials and scores, organize and maintain them, and make them useful for future generations.

The Mandolin Music Library was established. Through these activities, we hope to continue to preserve and maintain the irreplaceable world of mandolin music and truly contribute to its development. We will also make the collected scores and materials available to the public and build a system that will enable many people to make use of them.

www.mandolinmusiclibrary.com

Mandolin & Accordion in Dialogue

**An exceptional listening experience: the CD
Suite Populaire featuring Vincent Beer-
Demander (mandolin) and Grégory Daltin
(accordion), released by Larghetto Music.**

Grégory Daltin (accordion) and Vincent Beer-Demander (mandolin) are considered France's most distinguished mandolin-accordion duo. In 2019, the duo received the prestigious Gus Viseur Prize for their outstanding performances.

The duo's repertoire encompasses original works, arrangements, film scores, and contemporary compositions. Numerous renowned composers have dedicated works to them, including Vladimir Cosma—a Romanian composer, conductor, and violinist who built his career in France and the United States. The CD **Suite Populaire** features a selection of his compelling and diverse new compositions.

Grégory Daltin plays the accordion and bandoneon across a wide range of genres—from Baroque music and improvisation to multidisciplinary artistic projects. He teaches at the Toulouse Conservatory and is active in a variety of artistic pursuits. Vincent Beer-Demander is an exceptional mandolin and mandola player based at the Marseille Conservatory; he is a successful composer and conductor, and the founder of the "Mandol'in Marseille Festival."

This recording impressively demonstrates how well the timbres of the mandolin and accordion complement each other. Unusual as it may seem, this instrumental pairing offers a particularly rich array of facets. The mandolin produces sound through plucking; the tone is immediate but decays relatively quickly. The accordion, by contrast, can sustain a note indefinitely, as well as swell and shape it. This creates a captivating contrast: on one hand, the mandolin offers a sound that is precise, brilliant, percussive, and sparkling; on the other, the accordion provides a flowing, breathing, sustaining, and orchestral texture.

One instrument maps out the harmonic space, while the other traces the contours. In my view, the combination and tonal variety are even richer than in a mandolin-piano duo. The performance often feels more direct and personal. Despite their different methods of sound production, both instruments share a similar brightness within the sound spectrum. This is beautifully evident in the new recordings of Cosma's **Concerto Mediterraneo** and **Fantaisie Concertante**, where the accordion reveals even more facets than the piano does in the original version.

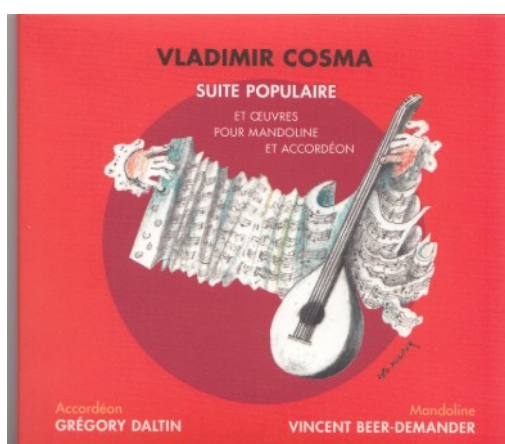
Thanks to its steel strings, the mandolin is rich in overtones, and the accordion—with its reeds—also produces a sound abundant in harmonics. As a result, the two instruments blend together surprisingly well. When played with the virtuosity demonstrated by these two gifted musicians on the album **Suite Populaire**, the listening experience becomes truly remarkable. Both shine while retaining their distinct identities; the mandolin is never swallowed up by the accordion but is instead enveloped by it in a transparent, delicate interplay.

The versatility of the accordion—named "Instrument of the Year 2026"—is evident in the way it provides bass lines and harmonies, weaves in counter-melodies, and creates rich sonic textures. Against this backdrop, the mandolin is free to truly let loose as a solo instrument, shining through a full spectrum of expressive shades and experimental flourishes. The result is a chamber music experience that feels as though it involves more than just two performers. Together, the artists conjure a Mediterranean soundscape that invites the listener on a journey spanning Argentina, Brazil, France, and Italy. French

musette, tango, folk music, street music, and jazz are all presented with equal appeal.

Vincent Beer-Demander makes such excellent use of the mandolin's rhythmic precision, distinctive tremolo, and varied picking techniques that slow pieces take on a highly vocal quality, while fast ones are rendered with great virtuosity. Grégory Daltin draws out the necessary sustained breath from his accordion, creating beautiful phrasing and rich, powerful sonic tapestries—both rhythmically and harmonically. The transparency, singing quality, timbres, rhythms, and rich harmonies combine to make the presented works by Vladimir Cosma an experience that is at once intimate and spectacular.

The mandolin is the light, revealing glittering lines and reflections. The accordion is the air; it sustains, moves, and



connects. The special allure arises precisely where the mandolin's brief, sparkling string sounds merge with the accordion's continuous, breathing tone.

Vladimir Cosma's meeting with the renowned film composer Michel Legrand marked the beginning of his subsequent career. While Cosma consistently emphasizes Legrand's importance, he also acknowledges the influence of composers such as Burt Bacharach and Henry Mancini. The celebrated composer Vladimir Cosma (known for scores such as **La Boum** and **The Tall Blond Man with One Black Shoe**) defines his soundtracks through a unique blend of classical orchestration, Eastern European folk music, and elements of jazz and pop. The main themes of his "Suite Populaire" are highly melodic—often playful or melancholic—and leave a lasting impression. His Romanian roots frequently infuse the music with spirited, folk-inspired melodies.

The suite draws heavy inspiration from Béla Bartók's **Romanian Folk Dances**. However, whereas Bartók collected authentic folk melodies, Cosma invented a kind of "imaginary folklore" for this suite. It comprises six movements that take the listener on a geographical and emotional journey from Eastern Europe to the Mediterranean: **Transylvania**—a melancholic yet fiery homage to Cosma's Romanian homeland; **Burlesca**—an extremely fast-paced, almost breathless movement filled with humorous musical twists; **Marcia**—an idiosyncratic march with a distinctive rhythm; **Intermezzo**—a brief, lyrical interlude; **Provencia**—a

musical tribute to Provence in southern France; and **Farandola**—a spirited, traditional southern French dance in 6/8 time that serves as a dazzling finale.

Vladimir Cosma composed the work **Cinéjazz** specifically for mandolin and accordion. It is a suite that brings together popular themes from his famous film scores (including **Le dîner de cons**, **Le jouet**, and **Le bal des casse-pieds**) and reimagines them in a jazz style. The world premiere of the piece took place in 2021 at the Festival International de Mandoline in Castellar, featuring mandolinist Vincent Beer-Demander and accordionist Grégory Daltin.

Cinéjazz evokes a spirited, melancholic, and elegant journey through French cinema, presented in a virtuosic, jazzy chamber-music style tailored for just two instruments. By combining well-known film themes by Vladimir Cosma, the piece blends the quintessential Parisian "cinema sound" with Eastern European melancholy and lively swing. The accordion often assumes the role of an entire jazz combo, providing deep, grooving bass lines, rich jazz chords, or soft, sustained harmonic textures.

The mandolin ripples virtuously over the top, taking up the rapid melodic lines and creating nostalgic, emotional highlights with its characteristic tremolo. The piece shifts between driving, syncopated jazz rhythms, the buoyant swing of Gypsy jazz, and dance-like passages reminiscent of a modern, dynamic musette accordion in the streets of Paris. Cosma's signature style shines through here as well—the music is highly melodic, witty, humorous, and playful, yet frequently slips into a dreamy, almost bittersweet cinematic romanticism. Overall, the work has a delicate, transparent, and lively sound, as the two traditional instruments operate in a thoroughly modern, non-classical, and highly percussive manner—much like a tight-knit jazz band—brilliantly performed by Vincent Beer-Demander and Grégory Daltin. Congratulations on this superb recording and the resulting sonic experience, which captures the thrilling interplay between the accordion (an aerophone) and the mandolin (a plucked instrument)!

Daniela Heise

Vice President, International Mandolin Society

The International Mandolin Society

The International Mandolin Society (IMAS) was founded on June 5, 2021, to create a forum for professionals involved with the mandolin and its music—those interested in closer collaboration—to meet and exchange expertise at both national and international levels. Its aim is to shed light on the state of mandolin music in various countries, raise its profile, and highlight interesting developments. The Society seeks to contribute to improving educational opportunities and advancing the art of mandolin playing in all its forms. IMAS is organized as an association under German law and is supported by committed individuals rather than by larger organizations or federations.

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