

Monthly Newsletter

RODINA

The Bulgarian Cultural and
Social Association



March: the gentle flower that enchants

February was a month in which the Bulgarian community here in Australia showed just how strong and united we can be.

The school year for the Bulgarian School began with enthusiasm – the children once again crossed the threshold of the classrooms, where they learn and preserve our language. Our evenings were filled with culture – together we experienced the legend Gundi on the big screen, and our meeting with Dimana Boyanova and Alexander Bogeff gave us an evening where music and laughter brought Bulgaria back into our hearts. We danced, sang, and shared – such moments remind us why our traditions are alive.

Al of a sudden, March has arrived – a month that begins with white and red, with wishes for health and smiles given generously. Somewhere in Bulgaria, snowdrops are emerging from beneath the snow, while here in Australia, the summer sun still reminds us of its presence.

It's time for new beginnings – Lent has started, and for Muslims worldwide, the holy month of Ramadan has begun. The air is filled with anticipation – anticipation of spring, of holidays, and of the upcoming meetings.

We are all eagerly awaiting the next unforgettable night for the Bulgarian community – the live concert of rock legend Milena Slavova! On April 5th at Five Dock RSL, she will shake the stage with her iconic hits, and special guests will include our local bands ABD and Plan BG.

And while we count the days until Milena's concert, let us wear our Martenitsas with pride and enjoy the warmth of the Bulgarian community here, far from home, but always close in our hearts.

Rodina Team x

In this newsletter
you can expect:

Milena Slavova
LIVE in Sydney

Once upon a
time...
The story of
Penka Kouneva

Events in
Sydney this
month

Festivals in
Bulgaria in
March



Get ready for an electrifying night of rock music, as the legendary **Milena Slavova**, the undisputed icon of Bulgarian rock, takes the stage for an unforgettable performance! Join us for an evening filled with energy, where the music will touch your soul and the atmosphere will be unlike anything else.

Milena Slavova will perform her most beloved hits that have defined her illustrious career, making this more than just a concert—it's a celebration of the timeless spirit of rock music.

Adding to the excitement, our community bands ABD and Plan BG will also perform, bringing their own vibrant energy to the stage. These talented local bands are sure to make the night even more special, creating a unique blend of Bulgarian rock and the spirit of our community.

Tickets for the event are already available on the Rodina website, so don't miss out on this incredible opportunity! Gather your friends and get ready to rock out with the queen of Bulgarian rock on April 5th at Five Dock RSL!



Children craft martenitsi

The first weekend of March, the students at the Bulgarian Language School "Petar Beron" will have a special craft session where they will handcraft Martenitsi, a traditional Bulgarian symbol of health and prosperity. It's a wonderful opportunity for the children to learn more about Bulgarian customs while engaging in a creative activity. Families are reminded to ensure they've registered their children's intention to attend the school this year through the Rodina website. We look forward to seeing everyone there!



Bulgarian Rhythms at Zdravei Festival Adelaide | A Celebration of Bulgarian Culture in Australia

"Zdravei" Festival

We invite everyone to check out the latest video on the Bulgarian Rhythms Dance Group YouTube channel, showcasing our performance at the vibrant Zdravei Festival in Adelaide. The group was warmly welcomed by the largest Bulgarian community in Australia, and the atmosphere was full of joy and celebration. Don't miss the chance to experience the energy and spirit of the event – feel the excitement and subscribe to our channel!

"Once upon a time..." - legends in the making

Penka Kouneva - the composer who turned dreams into music



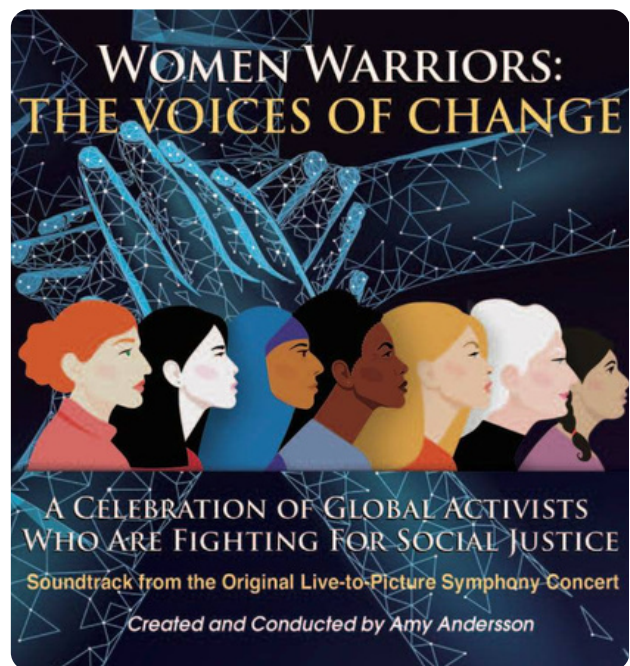
But Penka wanted to tell her own stories through music. She created original albums dedicated to the power of the human spirit. One of them, *Woman Astronaut*, was inspired by the brave women who dared to travel to space. Her music was so impactful that the album won the prestigious Hollywood Music in Media Award.

Her greatest recognition came in 2022 when her album *Women Warriors: The Voices of Change* won a Grammy Award. The work was dedicated to female activists from around the world fighting for equality and justice. Penka composed the music for the album's most dramatic moments, including the protests against the AIDS crisis, the Me Too movement, and the struggle for peace in the Middle East.

Once upon a time in the modern world, there was a girl born with music in her heart. Her name was Penka Kouneva, and from a very young age, she knew she wanted to create worlds through sound. Her mother, a music analysis professor, recognized her talent and began teaching her how to write music. By the age of six, Penka was already composing small pieces, and as a student at the National Music School, she was creating music for children's theater productions.

But her dreams didn't stop there. She graduated from the National Academy of Music "Prof. Pancho Vladigerov" and later earned a full scholarship to the prestigious Duke University in North Carolina. There, she became the first PhD student in composition, proving that Bulgarian talent knows no boundaries. After completing her studies, she set out to conquer Hollywood—with just a backpack, no money, but an unshakable will and passion for music.

The journey was tough, but Penka never gave up. She started by arranging music for other composers, and over time, her own compositions found their place in some of the biggest film and gaming projects. Her talent resonated in blockbuster productions such as *The Matrix*, *Pirates of the Caribbean*, *Transformers*, and *Prince of Persia*. Her passion for new technologies also led her into the world of virtual reality, where her music brought to life *The Mummy* and *Hellboy*.



Today, Penka Kouneva's music can even be heard at the Kennedy Space Center in Florida, where it tells the story of space missions. She is living proof that dreams have no limits and that talent, hard work, and perseverance can turn a little girl with a piano into a true legend on the global music stage.

Things to do this month

In and around Sydney

- **Clean Up Australia Day**
When: 2 Mar
- **St Patrick's Day Festival**
When: 13 - 17 Mar
Where: The Rocks
- **All About Women Festival**
When: 8 - 9 Mar
Where: various venues
Cost: From \$35
- **Climate Action Week**
When: 10 -16 Mar
Where: various locations
Cost: Free or low-cost events
- **Holi Hai Festival**
When: 13 Mar, 11am-2pm,
4pm - 7pm
Where: Innovation Plaza,
South Eveleigh
Cost: Free



- **Mind, Body & Spirit**
When: 20 - 23 Mar
Where: ICC, Darling Harbour
- **Twilight Food Fair**
When: 14 Mar & 28 Mar,
4:30pm - 8:30pm
Where: Ted Mack Civic Park,
North Sydney
Cost: Free
- **Le Marche French Market**
When: 09 Mar, 9am - 1pm
Where: Woolwich Dock,
adjacent to The Deckhouse

- **Alliance Française French Film Festival**
When: 4 Mar - 9 Apr
Where: various locations
- **Serbian Film Festival**
When: 14 - 24 Mar
Where: HOYTS
Entertainment Quarter



- **Sparkling Wahroonga Food + Wine festival**
When: 02 Mar, 11am - 5pm
Where: Wahroonga
Cost: Free entry,
\$37.50 wine tasting
- **Carriageworks' Autumn Seasonal Market**
When: 8 Mar, 8am - 1pm
Where: Carriageworks,
Eveleigh
- **Australian Superbike Championship**
When: 28 - 29 Mar
Where: Motorsport Park
- **Wings Over Illawarra**
Where: Airport Road Albion
Park Rail
Cost: \$60 day pass
\$95 weekend pass
- **Blue Mountains Music Festival**
When: 14 - 16 Mar
Where: Katoomba (Festival
precinct bounded by
Lurline, Merriwa, Ada
and Waratah Streets)
Cost: free & paid shows

Festivals in Bulgaria in March

- Winter Carnival "Corks in Asenovo"
Where: Asenovo, Nikopol
When: 01 Mar
- Carnival Festival FURSHANGI 2025
Where: Bardarski Geran,
Byala Slatina
When: 01 - 02 Mar
- First Festival of Fried Meat and Pacha
Where: Golyamo Vranovo,
Ruse
When: 01 Mar
- Festival "Winter Tale in Koprivshitsa"
Where: Koprivshitsa
When: 01 - 02 Mar
- Winter Festival of Traditions
Where: Sofia
When: 09 Mar
- Festival of Tsalapishki Babek and Wine
Where: Tsalapitsa,
Rhodope Mountains
When: 29 Mar





Celebrating the Strength and Harmony

As we close this edition of the newsletter, let us take a moment to celebrate the incredible women in our lives. From mothers, daughters, and sisters to friends and mentors, each woman brings her unique strength, light, and grace to the world. Women carry within them the resilience, creativity, and love that shape our communities and make our lives richer. Today, we honor the power of women to create change, inspire, and lead in all areas of life.

Each woman is a universe unto herself, full of dreams and aspirations, and deserving of recognition for the impact she has on the world. Whether she is a leader, a caregiver, or an artist, every woman plays a role in making the world a better place. It's in the diversity of our experiences and the strength we find within ourselves that true growth happens.

While we celebrate women, it's important to also acknowledge the men who stand by them, supporting and balancing their efforts. Together, women and men create a powerful synergy that helps lift each other up and bring out the best in one another. It's through this partnership that we build stronger communities and create lasting change.

Looking ahead, let's continue to support and uplift each other, celebrating the unique qualities that both women and men bring to the world. Together, we can build a world where everyone feels valued, empowered, and celebrated. Here's to the women who inspire us every day, and to the men who stand beside them!

Warm regards,
The Rodina Sydney Team

Thank You for Reading!

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