

American Modern Recordings Presents

**SPHERES**

Claremont Trio Performs Music of Robert Paterson



The Claremont Trio – Emily Bruskin, violin; Julia Bruskin, cello; and Andrea Lam, piano – called “one of America’s finest young chamber groups” by The Strad magazine, were the very first winners of the Kalichstein-Laredo-Robinson International Trio Award and the only piano trio ever to win the Young Concert Artists International Auditions. Of the group’s CD of trios by Beethoven and Ravel, Audiophile Audition raved, “These are some of the most impassioned, moving, and notable readings of these favorites that I have ever heard, bar none.”

For its latest recording, the Claremont Trio has chosen music by American composer Robert Paterson. [\*Spheres\*](#), a new disc released December 4, 2016, by American Modern Recordings, features three works related to celestial bodies that are intensely evocative both of this theme and of earthly humanity. *Spheres* features *Moon Trio* (2015); *Sun Trio* (1995/2008; recorded with the Claremont’s former pianist, Donna Kwong); and *Elegy for Two Cellos and Piano* (2006/8; recorded with guest cellist Karen Ouzounian), which references and quotes music included on the Golden Record that was included with the Voyager Spacecraft, with playful imagery of how that music decays along with the craft’s plutonium fuel as the spacecraft exits our solar system.

In these three works, Paterson – a composer whose music has been praised as “gorgeous” (New York Times) and “deeply resonant” (Opera News) – imagines the cosmos, utilizing quotes – overtly or subtly – from works by J.S. Bach, Stravinsky, Bartok, Scriabin, Arensky, and Webern, and a movement inspired by the sound of Indian raga.

“It’s an incredible joy for a composer to work with an ensemble that is a perfect fit for his/her music,” says Paterson. “In the case of the Claremont Trio, I have found that ensemble. Every minute with this trio has been a pleasure from start to finish. I feel such a deep, almost religious passion for these works, and they matched it – they recorded them perfectly.”

Robert Paterson and the Claremont Trio first became acquainted through music producer and engineer Adam Abeshouse when Paterson asked him, “Which is the best piano trio you’ve worked with recently?” Without hesitation, Adam said, “the Claremont Trio, of course.” Paterson sent them a copy of his *Sun Trio* – they loved it, and agreed to record it for an album of his works, and then suggested the idea of Paterson composing a brand new trio for them and for this album. That work became *Moon Trio*.

### **Upcoming Performances of *Moon Trio***

To mark the release of *Spheres*, the Claremont Trio performed *Moon Trio* on December 4 at the Emelin Theater in Mamaroneck, NY, and will perform it at a Merkin Hall concert on [Sunday, January 29, 2017](#). They will also perform *Moon Trio* on a program at the Brooklyn Public Library at 10 Grand Army Plaza, Brooklyn, NY, on a date in 2017 to be announced.

### **Additional Recent and Upcoming Releases with Music by Robert Paterson**

- [JOY](#) (American Modern Recordings, release date December 6, 2017), a disc by **Linya Su, violin, and Blair McMillen, piano**, contains contemporary works for violin and piano by Robert Paterson (Sonata No. 1 for Violin and Piano, 2003), John Corigliano, David Dzubay, and Paul SanGregory. [Read more](#) about how the chosen works “reflect the spirit of the Empire State Building.”
- [Perspectives](#) (Summit Records, release date January 11, 2017), a disc by the **American Brass Quintet** featuring Robert Paterson’s *Shine*, a piece which the ABQ has said has “stopped the show at every performance.”

**Here are excerpts from Robert Paterson’s own descriptions of the music of *Spheres*:**

### ***Moon Trio* for Violin, Cello, and Piano (2015)**

*Moon Trio* is the sister piece for *Sun Trio*. The first movement, *Moonbeams*, consists of bright, cascading arpeggios that interact and overlap. The second, *Lunatic Asylum*, is a highly rhythmic, mixed-meter scherzo that capitalizes on extreme ranges and timbral effects. The third, *Blue Moon*, is slow, hazy and dreamlike, and is built on long held chords and lush melodies in the violin and cello. The last movement, *Moon Trip*, is like taking a trip on a rocket ship. It begins explosively, contains an ethereal middle section, and ends solidly as the trio finally lands on solid ground. *Moon Trio* was commissioned by the Claremont Trio and Rick Teller.

### **Elegy for Two Cellos and Piano (2006/8)**

Bassoonist Charles McCracken asked me to write *Elegy* for two bassoons and piano in memory of his father, Charles P. McCracken, a well-known and highly-regarded cellist in the New York musical community. Since this piece references Bach’s cello suites and Charles Sr. was a cellist, and the cello and bassoon have very similar ranges, I made this transcription for two cellos and piano. His only request was that I quote a work that his father loved to play, one of the cello suites by J.S. Bach. I quote Bach’s *Fifth Cello Suite*, one of his father’s favorite pieces, and also Bach’s *Third Cello Suite*. Additionally, there is a third quote toward the end from Bach’s *Prelude No. 1 in C Major* from the *The Well-Tempered Clavier, Book II*. This is one of three works of J.S. Bach that were included on the Golden Record, a disc that was sent into space on NASA Voyager Spacecrafts 1 and 2 launched in 1977.

I had a surrealistic vision of Bach's music floating through space, as if the Voyager is singing to itself and to the cosmos, trying to keep itself company as it travels across the vastness of our galaxy. The Voyager Spacecrafts are fueled by a plutonium fuel source. Due to radiation decay, this fuel will die out ca. 2020 and cause the spacecrafts to cease operations. I re-wrote the final Bach quote to sound like the music is also melting and decaying as the plutonium decays. In incorporating this decaying quote, I was indirectly inspired one of my favorite pieces, George Crumb's *Makrokosmos III, Music for a Summer Evening*. The original *Elegy* was commissioned by Charles McCracken and Gordon Harris through the American Composers Forum and is written in memory of Charles P. McCracken.

### ***Sun Trio for Violin, Cello, and Piano (1995/2008)***

The first movement, *Sun Day*, is meant to evoke feelings you get when summer, mid-day sunbeams appear from between the clouds and warm your skin. *Sunset*, the second movement, was inspired by Lake Champlain in Burlington, Vermont, and my wife Victoria. I envisioned us embracing, dancing a Tango under a multi-colored sunset—at times, to themes from Stravinsky's *L'Histoire du soldat*. Victoria is a much better dancer, so in this movement, she teaches me the steps. I fumble around and finally get it right, and then the sun sets. The third movement, *Absence of Sun*, is connected from beginning to end by a long melodic line. The cello melody is modeled after a classical Indian sitar raga, specifically, the traditional, slow introductory section of a classical Indian composition.

The fourth movement, *Sunrise*, is meant to evoke the feeling you get when watching the sun rise. There is a "Sun" peak of an octave, a bright yellow 'E', symbolizing the first, intense, bright sunbeam peeking over the horizon. In the middle of the movement, a string of rising chords mimics a "fast-forward" of the sun rising in the sky. Later in the movement, the violin and cello play decelerated bird motives. I use the "mystic chord" by Alexander Scriabin as melodic and chordal material for the anticipation of the rising of the sun. The sprightly *Sun Dance* closes the work, vibrantly contrasting with the other four. The initial piano motive is taken from *Five Movements* for string quartet by Anton Webern. *Sun Trio* was commissioned by Dennis O'Brien to commemorate the 98th birthday of Helen O'Brien.

**The Claremont Trio** is sought after for its thrillingly virtuosic and richly communicative performances. First winners of the Kalichstein-Laredo-Robinson International Trio Award and the only piano trio ever to win the Young Concert Artists International Auditions, the Claremonts are consistently lauded for their "aesthetic maturity, interpretive depth, and exuberance" (Palm Beach Daily News).

Gramophone magazine praised the trio's "poetry and... thrilling virtuosity" in their Beethoven "Triple" Concerto with the San Francisco Ballet Orchestra, recently released on Bridge Records. Their discography also includes Mendelssohn trios, Shostakovich and Arensky trios, and a disc of American trios; works by Leon Kirchner, Ellen Taaffe Zwilich, Paul Schoenfield, and Mason Bates. A collaborative album with clarinetist Jonathan Cohler garnered a glowing review in Fanfare magazine and received a Critic's CHOICE award from BBC Magazine.

The Claremont Trio has commissioned new trios by Mason Bates, Paul Chihara, Donald Crockett, Sharon Farber, Howard Frazin, Helen Grime, Gabriela Daniel Kellogg, Lena Frank, Nico Muhly, Robert Paterson, Sean Shepherd, and Hillary Zipper. They have conducted master classes at Columbia University, Eastman School of Music, Duke University, Peabody Conservatory's Preparatory Division, and the Boston Conservatory.

The Claremont Trio was formed in 1999 at the Juilliard School. Twin sisters Emily Bruskin (violin) and Julia Bruskin (cello) grew up in Cambridge, Massachusetts, and they both play old French instruments.

Emily's violin is a Lupot from 1795; Julia's cello is a J.B. Vuillaume from 1849. Andrea Lam (piano) grew up in Sydney, Australia. The ensemble's members are all now based in New York City near their namesake: Claremont Avenue. [www.claremonttrio.com](http://www.claremonttrio.com).

**Robert Paterson's** music has been performed by the Louisville Orchestra, Minnesota Orchestra, American Composers Orchestra, Austin Symphony, Vermont Symphony, Pittsburgh New Music Ensemble, New York New Music Ensemble, California EAR Unit, and Ensemble Aleph in Paris. In 2011, he was named Composer of The Year by the Classical Recording Foundation with a performance and celebration at Carnegie's Weill Hall. His music is featured in more than 20 recordings and has been on the Grammy® ballot annually since 2012.

His music has been performed by over one hundred ensembles, including the American Composers Orchestra, Minnesota Orchestra, Vermont Symphony Orchestra, Austin Symphony, and the Louisville Orchestra. Recent performances include the world premiere of *Ghost Theater*, commissioned by the Albany Symphony's Dogs of Desire (2015), and in 2016, the world premiere of *Shine* commissioned by the American Brass Quintet, *Moon Trio* commission by the Claremont Trio and *Graffiti Canons*, commissioned by the Volti choir in San Francisco.

Paterson's brand new opera *Three Way* will receive its 2017 premiere in a coproduction by Nashville Opera and American Opera Projects, as well as developmental support from American Opera Projects' Composers and the Voice and First Chance programs, Fort Worth Opera's Frontiers program and Opera America's Repertoire Development program. *Three Way* will also be presented at BAM in Brooklyn in June 2017, as a co-presentation by Nashville Opera and American Opera Projects .

Recent commissions and recordings include *Walt's America* for orchestra and chorus by the Gulf Coast Symphony, *Dark Mountains* by the Vermont Symphony Orchestra, and *I See You*, performed by an all-star string orchestra conducted by Delta David Gier, with the JACK Quartet, Del Sol Quartet, PUBLIQuartet, and the American Modern Ensemble.

Born in 1970, Paterson was raised in Buffalo, New York, the son of a sculptor and a painter. Although his first love was percussion, he soon discovered a passion for composition, writing his first piece at age thirteen. In the late 1980s, Paterson pioneered the development of a six-mallet marimba technique. He presented the world's first six-mallet marimba recital at the Eastman School of Music in 1993, and released the first-ever album of six-mallet music, *Six Mallet Marimba* in 2012 (AMR) to a sold out crowd at the Rubin Museum in Chelsea, NYC .

In 2005, Paterson founded the American Modern Ensemble (AME), which spotlights American music via lively thematic programming. He serves as artistic director for AME as well as house composer, frequently contributing new pieces to the ensemble, and he directs the affiliated record label, American Modern Recordings (AMR), which is distributed by NAXOS. Paterson's recordings are also featured on the Capstone, Centaur, Summit and RiAx labels. Discography: <http://robertpaterson.com/albums/>  
[www.robertpaterson.com](http://www.robertpaterson.com).

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## **SPHERES**

### **Music of Robert Paterson Claremont Trio**

#### *Moon Trio* (2015)

- I. Moonbeams [5:03]
- II. Lunatic Asylum [3:34]
- III. Blue Moon [5:53]
- IV. Moon Trip [6:00]

#### *Sun Trio* (1995/2008)

- I. Sun Day [11:00]
- II. Sunset [8:50]
- III. Absence of Sun [6:29]
- IV. Sunrise [8:08]
- V. Sun Dance [5:50]

#### *Elegy for Two Cellos and Piano* (2006/8) [11:39]

Performers: Claremont Trio – Emily Bruskin, violin; Julia Bruskin, cello; Andrea Lam, piano (*Moon Trio* and *Elegy*); Donna Kwong, piano (*Sun Trio*); special guest, Karen Ouzounian, cello (second cello on *Elegy*)

Produced, Edited, Mixed and Mastered by Adam Abeshouse

Executive Producer: Robert Paterson

Recorded at the Academy of Arts and Letter, New York, NY, June 11-12 (*Sun Trio*) and May 31, 2016 (*Moon Trio* and *Elegy*)

Piano provided by Klavierhaus, New York, NY (*Sun Trio*) and Steinway (*Moon Trio* and *Elegy*)

Piano Technician: Ed Court (*Sun Trio*), Steinway Technician (*Moon Trio* and *Elegy*)

Album Photos and Art: Lisa-Marie Mazzucco

Package Design: Pat Burke

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**Available now for purchase on [Bandcamp](#)**

**Available January 20, 2017, on Amazon, iTunes, and all major retailers and digital outlets.**

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<http://www.americanmodernrecordings.com/spheres>

*December 6, 2016*