

hat trick
BIG SKY



BRIDGE 9595

BIG SKY

THEA MUSGRAVE

[b. 1928]

1) Sunrise [9:42]

DANIEL DORFF

[b. 1956]

Big Sky [11:59]

2) I. Montana Morning [3:43]

3) II. Dancing Under the Stars [8:16]

ARNOLD BAX

[1883-1953]

4) Elegiac Trio [9:06]

JESSICA MEYER

[b. 1974]

5) My Heart is the Churning Sea [4:35]

DAVID BRUCE

[b. 1970]

The Eye of Night [15:55]

6) I. Tender, Sensual, Quietly Plaintive [3:56]

7) II. Tenderly [2:12]

8) III. With a Lilt [4:13]

9) IV. Senza vibrato, viol-like – A tempo –
Hushed, with great inner intensity – Calmo [5:34]

ANGÉLICA NEGRÓN

[b. 1981]

10) Drawings for Meyoko [7:38]

hat trick

APRIL CLAYTON

Flute, Alto Flute, Bass Flute, Vocals

KRISTI SHADE

Harp, Vocals

DAVID WALLACE

Viola, Tenor Banjo, Vocals

THE ROAD TO *BIG SKY*

In January of 2023, Hat Trick met in New York City to plan our second album. As we rehearsed and chose repertoire, we began to discuss potential producers and recording locations. At an orchestral festival in Mexico, Kristi had worked with Justus Beyer, an accomplished Tonmeister based in Berlin.

Beyer's harp recordings instantly captivated our attention. Germany's Tonmeister tradition is world-renowned for its immersive, lush, and detailed results. We made the decision to travel to Germany, work with Justus, and experience this approach first-hand.

Justus immediately responded with enthusiasm and practical details. Plans quickly fell into place. In November, we met in Germany and enjoyed four days of recording at Sendesaal Bremen. This amazing experience inspired us musically and personally. As you listen, we hope you share the energy, passion, and love that were poured into this recording.

— April, David, and Kristi

***Sunrise* by Thea Musgrave**

Financial Times music critic Andrew Clark praises composer Thea Musgrave's oeuvre for its "personal voice that commands respect" and her distinctive "craftsmanship and sense of dramatic pace." Musgrave's *Sunrise* perfectly exemplifies these qualities.

In the composer's words:

Sunrise starts slowly with the alto flute leading a *dark dream-like* section with a theme that is marked *rubato*, *seductive*. The viola echoes this melody but tries to move it to another key. Eventually the tempo quickens as the harp adds a new theme which the others soon copy.

A new section *svegliato* (awakening) follows where the harp and viola encourage the flute to join them in a sprightly scherzo which grows to a climax to herald the sunrise. Here the viola leads with a *glowing* theme. After the flute has echoed this melody, the mood quietens, and in a *peaceful* coda, the flute 'remembers' the theme from the very opening: it is now bathed in sunlight and is marked *luminous*.

Sunrise is dedicated to flutist Carol Wincenc and was commissioned to celebrate her fortieth anniversary on the concert stage. Wincenc's trio (Les Amies) premiered *Sunrise* at New York City's Morgan Library on February 22, 2010, and the work received warm press reviews. In the ensuing fifteen years, however, Musgrave's widely available score did not receive the attention it clearly merits.

We sincerely hope that this world premiere recording will bring *Sunrise* to a broader audience. In our opinion, it deserves to become a staple of the flute-violaharp trio repertoire.

***Big Sky* by Daniel Dorff**

In August of 2019, Hat Trick approached composer Daniel Dorff to ask about commissioning a new work from him. Thrilled by his interest, we were happily poised to learn newly-composed music, perform and record it. Unfortunately, subsequent delays in the form of COVID stepped in.

During January 2023, after a multi-year hiatus, Hat Trick assembled in New York City to explore Dorff's newly-finished commission, titled *Big Sky*.

The selections found on our second album were shaped by this first seminal work, which we knew would be included. As we rehearsed *Big Sky*, we simultaneously searched for complementary repertoire. Together, we carefully brainstormed, researched, and selected the other works.

Of *Big Sky*, Dorff suggests that his movement titles provide the only necessary program note: “I. Montana Morning; II. Dancing Under the Stars.” With a distinctively American flavor, *Big Sky* is “music that sparkles and cajoles in its tuneful caressing of the ears” – exactly as *Fanfare Magazine* has described Dorff’s compositional style.

***Elegiac Trio* by Arnold Bax**

British composer Arnold Bax composed *Elegiac Trio* during the spring of 1916 as a direct response to Ireland’s Easter Uprising. The Uprising began on Easter Monday and lasted six days, killing 485 people. Several of Bax’s friends perished.

Rather than depicting violence and devastation, *Elegiac Trio* provides a stirring lament and tribute commemorating Bax’s martyred friends and their ideals. His choice of harp and flute

references these instruments' centrality to Irish music and culture. Viola lends a mournful and heroic voice.

Elegiac Trio has become one of the most beloved and standard pieces of the flute-viola-harp repertoire. Although it is the oldest piece on our album, it maintains close aesthetic and emotional ties to our other pieces' themes: human nature and our human responses to nature, the churning sea, and the vastness- or darkness- of the sky.

***My Heart is the Churning Sea* by Jessica Meyer**

Another Hat Trick commission, Jessica Meyer's *My Heart is the Churning Sea* showcases her fresh, engaging, modern style. Meyer describes her exciting, evocative piece as follows:

Since the beginning of 2021, I have regularly visited Montauk, NY in the off-season. Every morning, I jog across Old Montauk Highway to catch the sunrise. I have conceived many of my works on that stretch of beach between 12M and 8M.

On September 13th, 2023, I witnessed amazing waves all morning as Hurricane Lee moved up the east coast. I showed

one of these photos to the folks of Hat Trick, and this piece was born.

My favorite movement of Claude Debussy's trio for the same instrumentation has always been the third. I deeply love every chance I get to rock out those jazzy rhythms and flourishes as a violist!

Having known David "Doc" Wallace for many years since our Juilliard days, I knew he was looking for a juicy, groovy viola part that he could sink his teeth into. I was more than happy to oblige. I was also excited to write for April Clayton- another colleague from conservatory days- and all the colors she creates. Finally, I have been waiting quite a while to write for harp. I am deeply thankful to Kristi Shade for showing me the ins and outs of her instrument and for her collaborative patience.

It was a pleasure to write this fun little roller-coaster of a piece inspired by the waves, and how they can represent the intense feelings of the heart.

***The Eye of Night* by David Bruce**

The Eye of Night was commissioned in 2010 by Art of Elan in San Diego for The Myriad Trio. As Bruce describes his piece:

It is a series of four tender movements, each in their own way a kind of nocturne. The night, and in particular the night sky, has long held a fascination for me. We all know the awe-inspiring sight that awaits us if we are lucky enough to find ourselves away from the city lights in front of a cloudless night sky – I think the awe we experience on such occasions is not just because of the beauty and grandeur of the spectacle – but because it is one of the very few times we are directly faced with the vast mystery of the universe.

I have been drawn to the image, first discovered in a short story by Aimee Bender, of the night sky as a giant eye looking down on us, unblinkingly. The image fascinates me because it captures the complexity of feelings one experiences when staring up into space – it is friendly, familiar and constant, whilst at the same time being overwhelming, dizzying and quietly terrifying.

The first of the pieces has a dark atmosphere that falls somewhere between sensual and plaintive. The melodic flute lines draw inspiration from the ornamental style of Indian bansuri flute playing. The second very short movement has a sweeter atmosphere, showing a more tender and blissful side of night. The third, while still in a largely piano or pianissimo dynamic register, is more active and flowing. The final piece is a lullaby, or ‘song without words,’ inspired by William Blake’s “Cradle Song” where he imagines the ‘little sorrows’ and ‘quiet desires’ of a sleeping baby.

***Drawings for Meyoko* by Angélica Negrón**

Composer Angélica Negrón writes:

Drawings for Meyoko is a piece inspired by the black and white illustrations of Ecuadorian artist Melissa Murillo (aka Meyoko). The piece intends to evoke an atmospheric and dreamy world in which her bizarre characters could exist by the use of playful patterns and voices mostly mumbling nonsense syllables. *Drawings for Meyoko* incorporates found sounds and micro-samples from my previous pieces to create electronic soundscapes that constantly evolve through

sifting rhythms. This process responds to my interest in exploring different ways of controlling temporality by capturing, evoking, and retaining specific moments in time through my music.

The piece was written for janus, an acclaimed flute-violaharp trio.

Negrón's delightful work takes the trio into unprecedented territory. Everyone sings and wears headphones to synchronize their parts to Negrón's pre-recorded electronic track. For added color, the violist plays banjo. The flutist exclusively plays alto flute, offering a deep range, velvety textures, and percussive rhythmic effects, alongside idiomatic flute lines and birdlike treble flourishes. The piece opens and closes with musicians crumpling paper.

When Hat Trick approached Angélica about making the second recording of *Drawings for Meyoko*, she warmly approved, noting:

For me, it's the piece that started it all. The first one I wrote in which I started to embrace all parts of myself in my music—which is something that has significantly shaped my career and my life.

— CD liner notes written by Hat Trick



Formed in 2013, **Hat Trick** is a virtuosic flute-violaharp trio whose members are equally at home as chamber musicians, soloists, and agents of audience engagement. Hat Trick presents works they commission alongside established masterworks and exemplary recent compositions. The trio's debut CD, *Garden of Joys and Sorrows* [Bridge 9472], received a Grammy nod for contributing to David Frost's 2018 Producer of the Year, Classical Grammy win.

April Clayton's solo, chamber, and orchestral performances have taken her around the world to Zurich, Riva del Garda, Granada, Leipzig, Moscow, Vancouver, Barbados, Haiti, Bahia, Wales, Mexico, throughout South Korea, England, and across the USA. She has spent many summers performing and teaching in Vienna, Varna, and Paris alongside faculty from the Paris Conservatory, Ecole Normale de Musique, Schola Cantorum, Juilliard, and others.

A featured artist in numerous National Flute Association Conventions, including a "Saturday Headliner" duo recital with Carol Wincenc and a "Generation X All-Stars" concert with five top peers, April was a Starr Doctoral Fellow at Juilliard and the youngest student admitted to their doctoral program. She is a Burkart Flutes Artist. www.aprilclayton.com



Kristi Shade is a harpist based in New York City, where she maintains an active performing and teaching schedule. Kristi is Principal Harpist with The Chamber Orchestra of New York and performs regularly on Broadway. She is a member of the flute-viola-harp trio, Hat Trick, and the harp duo, Duo Scorpio. Both chamber ensembles have commissioned many prominent composers and premiered pieces all over the world. Duo Scorpio has received numerous grants and awards from Chamber Music America, the Classical Recording Foundation and the American Harp Society. Kristi holds degrees from the Manhattan School of Music and the University of Miami and serves on harp faculty at the Manhattan School of Music Precollege Division, the Brearley School, and the Spence School. www.kristishade.com



David Wallace solos like “Jimmy Page fronting Led Zeppelin” (*New York Times*). Whether playing Texas fiddle with The Doc Wallace Trio, classical compositions with Hat Trick, or six-string electric viola at heavy metal shows, Wallace engages an audience.

Chair of Berklee College of Music’s String Department and a Hermitage Fellow, David previously enjoyed fourteen years as a Juilliard professor and seventeen years as a New York Philharmonic Teaching Artist.

An award-winning composer, David’s commissioners include the New York Philharmonic, the Marian Anderson String Quartet, and violinist Rachel Barton Pine. David plays a viola built by Alexander Tulchinsky in 1991. www.docwallacemusic.com

Producing, Engineering, Mixing, Editing, Mastering: Justus Beyer

Recorded November 11-14, 2023, at Sendesaal Bremen, Germany

Photography: Justus Beyer

Album Art: Olivia Chindamo

Graphic Design: Casey Siu

Executive Producers: Becky & David Starobin

HAT TRICK THANKS

Bridge Records and Becky Starobin for production, distribution, and promotion; Marie-Pierre Langlamet and The Berlin Philharmonic for providing Kristi's harp; Aaron Dan for providing April's bass flute; Greg Liszt for banjo lessons; Felice Pomeranz for hospitality, rehearsal space, loyalty (and lobstah!); Sendesaal Bremen; Berklee College of Music; The Hermitage Artist Retreat; Our friends, families, teachers, and fans

For Bridge Records: Robert Starobin, Casey Siu, Ian Striedter, CiCi Fader, Alexis Napoliello, and Barbara Bersito

Robert Starobin, webmaster | Email: becky@bridgerecords.com

Bridge Records, Inc. • 200 Clinton Ave • New Rochelle, NY • 10801

www.BridgeRecords.com

