

## **American Modern Ensemble Is Joined by Duo Scorpio for the Opening of Its 2016-17 Season at Chelsea's The Cell: Music by Robert Paterson, Andy Akiho, and Lou Harrison on Friday, November 18, 2016**

**Three Composers with Percussion Backgrounds Write for Harp –**  
***Paterson: "Perhaps percussionists enjoy composing for the harp because in some ways writing for harp is similar to composing for mallet instruments."***



Duo Scorpio [Photo](#) by Frances Melhop

American Modern Ensemble, the critically-acclaimed new music group praised by The New York Times as "simply first-rate," opens its 2016-17 season joined by the harp duo Duo Scorpio at The Cell in Chelsea on Friday, November 18: a concert of harp-centric music ranging from a 1949 piece by the maverick Lou Harrison to three works written in the past five years by two young leading-edge composers, Robert Paterson and Andy Akiho. The concert is AME's annual fundraising event, featuring an open bar and hors d'oeuvres.

**Robert Paterson:** *Freya's Tears* (2011) for violin and harp

**Robert Paterson:** *Pegasus* (2014) for flute and harp

**Andy Akiho:** *Two Bridges* (2014) for two harps (written for Duo Scorpio)

**Lou Harrison:** Suite for Cello and Harp (1949)

Praised by The New York Times for "consistently showing a knack for inventive programming," American Modern Ensemble is led by composer Robert Paterson, its artistic director. Founded in 2005 with a core of 20 performers, AME spotlights American composers via lively thematic programming, performing a wide repertoire of new works using varied combinations of instrumentalists, vocalists, and conductors. The musicians performing this program are Sato Moughalian, flute; Esther Noh, violin; and Dave Eggar, cello. Harpists Kathryn Andrews and Kristi Shade are Duo Scorpio.

All three of the composers featured on the program are/were intimately involved with the world of percussion, especially early in their careers. Lou Harrison was one of the 20th century's most influential composers and innovators, especially with regard to percussion, often writing for instruments that might be regarded as junk or found objects. Andy Akiho is a master steel

drummer, and has written numerous steel drum parts for himself to perform. While a student at the Eastman School of Music, Robert Paterson invented his own six-mallet marimba technique and went on to revolutionize the world of six-mallet marimba performance.

And...all three composers have also written for harp. In Paterson's words, "Perhaps percussionists enjoy composing for the harp, because in some ways, writing for harp is similar to composing for mallet instruments. Both the harp and marimba have limited resonance: the notes only ring for so long, unlike with a violin or cello, so you have to find ways of composing for these instruments that capitalizes on their idiosyncrasies. You have to find creative ways of creating smooth textures. Furthermore, how does one compose lush harmonies, or intricate, chromatic chords when the harp is a non-chromatic instrument, or at least unlike a piano where a pianist has the use of ten fingers? Percussionists view these and other questions as welcome challenges."

*Two Bridges* by Akiho is a featured work on a new recording that Duo Scorpio will be releasing on the American Modern Recordings (AMR) label next spring.

**Listen to excerpts from Robert Paterson's *Freya's Tears*:**

<http://robertpaterson.com/freyas-tears>

**Listen to Robert Paterson's *Pegasus*:**

<http://robertpaterson.com/pegasus>

**Watch the first movement, "1883," of Andy Akiho's *Two Bridges* performed by Duo Scorpio:**

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=algMHOt\\_a7c](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=algMHOt_a7c)

**American Modern Ensemble's 2016-17 season** also includes a program of string quartets by Robert Moevs, Judith Shatin, and Steven Kemper at Rutgers University on [November 13](#); a concert of music by Jonathan Newman, Robert Paterson and others at Shenandoah University on [February 23](#); and "Voice of America," a program of vocal works including the New York premiere of Robert Paterson's *In Real Life*, a song cycle about online dating, with performers including soprano Marnie Breckenridge at Merkin Hall on [April 27](#). AME is also featured in the New York premiere performances of Robert Paterson's opera [Three Way](#) June 15, 16, 17, and 18, 2017, at BAM (the Brooklyn Academy of Music).

---

### **Duo Scorpio**

In 2010, harpists Kathryn Andrews and Kristi Shade began searching for music for their newly-formed ensemble and realized that this particular part of harp repertoire had yet to be fully explored in a contemporary setting. Duo Scorpio wants to help create a new body of work composed for the modern harp that highlights the versatility and uniqueness of the instrument.

In 2011, Duo Scorpio was awarded an American Harp Society Grant which they used for their first commission from composer Robert Paterson. His work, *Scorpion Tales*, was premiered by Duo Scorpio at the AHS National Conference in New York City on July 2, 2012. Duo Scorpio went on to record their debut album, *Scorpion Tales*, in the spring of 2012. It was released on the American Modern Recordings label on September 4, 2012 and was on the ballot nomination for the 2013 Grammy® awards. The duo was awarded a Classical Commissioning Grant in 2013 from Chamber Music America which they used for

their commission from composer Nico Muhly. Duo Scorpio was again awarded an American Harp Society Grant in 2013 which they used to commission composer Andy Akiho. Both pieces, *Fast Dances* (Muhly) and *Two Bridges* (Akiho), were premiered by Duo Scorpio at the World Harp Congress in Sydney, Australia on July 24, 2014. [www.duoscorpio.com](http://www.duoscorpio.com)

### **American Modern Ensemble**

Since its founding in 2005, American Modern Ensemble has premiered and performed over 250 works by over 175 living composers, has received acclaim from The New York Times, The New Yorker, and Sequenza21, among others, and has performed to capacity crowds at venues including Merkin Hall, Lincoln Center, the Rubin Museum, Dixon Place, and National Sawdust.

AME is committed to bridging the gap between audiences and creators, and aims to provide the most welcoming environment possible in which audiences can get to know the creators and performers. To date, over 95% of the composers whose works are being performed have attended the concerts, including John Luther Adams, John Corigliano, Sebastian Currier, David Del Tredici, Ben Johnston, Aaron Jay Kernis, Libby Larsen, Steven Mackey, Ingram Marshall, Paul Moravec, Christopher Rouse, Steven Stucky, Joan Tower, Chen Yi, and many others.

AME frequently collaborates with festivals and presenters such as the Cutting Edge New Music Festival, Prototype Opera Festival, American Opera Projects, and the Dance Theater of Harlem. Beginning 2015, AME is proud to announce an ongoing "In-Situ" partnership with National Sawdust in Williamsburg, Brooklyn. [www.americanmodernensemble.org](http://www.americanmodernensemble.org)

### **Robert Paterson**

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. [www.robertpaterson.com](http://www.robertpaterson.com)

---

### **Friday, November 18, 2016, at 7:30 pm**

**The Cell, 338 West 23<sup>rd</sup> Street, New York City**

**AMERICAN MODERN ENSEMBLE**

**With guest ensemble DUO SCORPIO**

**Kathryn Andrews & Kristi Shade, harps**

**Sato Moughalian, flute**

**Esther Noh, violin**

**Dave Eggar, cello**

**Robert Paterson: *Freya's Tears* (2011) for violin and harp**

**Robert Paterson: *Pegasus* (2014) for flute and harp**

**Andy Akiho: *Two Bridges* (2014) for two harps (written for Duo Scorpio)**

**Lou Harrison: *Suite for Cello and Harp* (1949)**

**Tickets: \$75, two tickets for \$100**

**Annual benefit event featuring open bar and hors d'oeuvres**

*October 25, 2016*