

DUO SCORPIO



TWO BRIDGES

## PROGRAM NOTES

(Notes by the composers)

FAST DANCES (2014) – Nico Muhly

Fast Dances is a series of five short movements for two harps. Each movement is a sort of rhythmic étude with slowly shifting harmonies. The first movement takes a few perpetual motion lines and splits them, pitch by pitch, between the two players. The second movement is a game about dividing the measures simultaneously into 2, 3, and 6 beats. The third movement—the slowest—is a meditation on a long, slow, downward scale, with one harp playing 5 beats to the bar and the other playing 4.

The fourth movement is quiet and anxious, and the fifth is anxious, loud, and fast.

Fast Dances was commissioned by Duo Scorpio, made possible by the Chamber Music America Classical Commissioning Program, with generous funding provided by The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, and the Chamber Music America Endowment Fund.

*World Premiere, Duo Scorpio,  
The World Harp Congress,  
Sydney, Australia, July 24, 2014*




RIVAL OF MARS (2015) – Christopher Dietz

In the constellation Scorpius, the bright red star Antares lies at the “heart” of the scorpion. Antares is sometimes translated as “rival of Mars” due to its similar color and brightness and has been a part of the mythologies of many cultures since ancient times. The star is more than 50,000 times more luminous than our sun and over 800 times its size.

If Antares were in the center of our solar system, its surface would engulf the orbit of Mars.

*World Premiere, Duo Scorpio, The American Harp Society National Conference, Atlanta, GA,  
July 2, 2016*





SCORPIONS (2016) – Paul Patterson. The name of the group, Duo Scorpio, and particularly the simultaneous date of the birthdays of Katie and Kristi, both born on November 5th 1982, inspired me to base the main melodic line of the work on the 6 numbers of their birthday. The system I used to find and create this melody was to start on C the lowest note of the harp and give numbers from 1-12 to all the notes in the chromatic scale. So, for example, their birthday, 11/5/1982, would produce the notes E Bb C Ab G Db.

The opening chord contains all 6 digits of their birthday. There is a strong element of dissonance giving the immediate sense of conflict and competition between the two scorpions whose space is being invaded by the other!

The work starts with a fiery exchange of notes including many percussion effects, such as tapping the body of the instruments as if they were drums, plus clapping and stamping of the feet.

The birthday motif is extended and passed around the players in aggressive ways as the conflict between the two harps develops and the use of pedal glissandi becomes a big feature. After an intensive series of interactive passages, the turmoil subsides and the atmosphere becomes calmer as the scorpions start to relax and the birthday motif becomes more tranquil with the use of soothing chords, gentle harmonics and atmospheric glissandos. Following this with a few intrusions, the energy gradually begins to build, leading into a vigorous finale where the melody is transformed into a high-spirited toccata. Like all scorpions, there is always a sting in their tail, as you will hear at the very end!

Scorpions was commissioned by Duo Scorpio,  
made possible through a grant from The American Harp Society.

*World Premiere, Duo Scorpio,  
The World Harp Congress,  
Hong Kong, July, 2017*

HARP DANCE (2013) – Ferdinando DeSena

Harp Dance was written especially for Duo Scorpio. The rhythms are renderings of a variety of dance patterns - salsa, jig, and tango among them. The chromatic challenges of contemporary music for harp are completely mitigated by having two harps. Harp Dance uses two seven-tone tunings, with five notes in common and two unique notes for each harp thereby giving a nine-tone aggregate with which to work.

*World Premiere, Duo Scorpio,  
The DiMenna Center, New York, NY,  
March 28, 2015*

MAGNETIC (2014) – Giovanni Piacentini

The aim of this work is to create a magnetic musical field of energy between the two players that gradually pulls them together, overthrowing duality, to form “one instrument”. The way I overcame this challenge is by generating polar opposites first, both harmonically and rhythmically, which slowly start to morph into a unified voice. This journey or dance of colliding forces, is the metaphor for the energy that I feel each time I listen to Kristi and Katie perform. Their every similarity and difference are exposed in a whirlwind of synergy which inevitably ends with the unification of their message; one strange, mysterious and beautiful voice emanating from within. This is “Magnetic”.

*World Premiere, Duo Scorpio,  
Le Poisson Rouge, New York, NY,  
November 16, 2014*



TWO BRIDGES (2014) – Andy Akiho

I currently live in Two Bridges, a neighborhood in lower Manhattan between the Brooklyn and Manhattan Bridges. I was inspired by the two bridges, imagining them as colossal harps in which the suspension cables serve as the strings. The titles of the first and third movements refer to the dates the Brooklyn and Manhattan Bridges were completed, respectively. The middle movement portrays the melodic reverberations of the bridges echoing beneath the East River.

Two Bridges was commissioned by and dedicated to Duo Scorpio, made possible by a grant from the American Harp Society.

*World Premiere, Duo Scorpio, The World Harp Congress,  
Sydney, Australia,  
July 24, 2014*



## CREDITS

Producer and Recording Engineer: Adam Abeshouse

Executive Producer: Robert Paterson

Recorded, Mixed and Mastered at Westchester Studios, February 2016

Art Direction and Photography: Frances J. Melhop

Liner Design: Pat Burke

Stylist: Vicky Sherwood

Hair Artist: Erika Pereira Lima

Make-up Artist: Clelia Bergonzoli

For more information on the composers, producers and performers:

Andy Akiho: [andyakiho.com](http://andyakiho.com) \* Nico Muhly: [nicomuhly.com](http://nicomuhly.com) \* Ferdinando De Sena: [desenamusic.org](http://desenamusic.org)

Giovanni Piacentini: [giovannipiacentini.com](http://giovannipiacentini.com) \* Christopher Dietz: [christopher-dietz.com](http://christopher-dietz.com)

Paul Patterson: [paulpatterson.co.uk](http://paulpatterson.co.uk) \* Adam Abeshouse: [abeshouseproductions.com](http://abeshouseproductions.com)

Frances Melhop: [frances-melhop.com](http://frances-melhop.com)

Duo Scorpio: [duoscorpio.com](http://duoscorpio.com)

We would like to thank the incredible composers who have made this album possible. It has been an absolute dream to work so closely with all of you. We are forever grateful for the support of The American Harp Society, Chamber Music America and all of the donors, colleagues, friends, and family who have helped with the funding of this album. Frances, thank you for your willingness to bring together 'Trio Scorpio' once again. We consider you not only a colleague, but also a good friend and are honored to get to be a part of your incredible work. Rob, thank you for your guidance throughout the years. Duo Scorpio is proud to be on the AMR label. Adam, it is always such a privilege and honor to work with you. Thank you for taking us under your wing and making our harps sound incredible once again. You are the best. And finally, to our little pineapple, Jack, thanks for being Duo Scorpio's youngest and biggest fan.

*-Katie and Kristi*

# DUO SCORPIO . TWO BRIDGES

*Fast Dances*\*\*\* (2014) 13'54" – Nico Muhly

1. No. 1
2. No. 2
3. No. 3
4. No. 4
5. No. 5
6. *Rival of Mars*\* (2015) 8'01" – Christopher Dietz
7. *Scorpions*\* \*\*\* (2016) 12'18" – Paul Patterson
8. *Harp Dance*\* (2013) 6'52" – Ferdinando DeSena
9. *Magnetic*\* (2014) 6'29" – Giovanni Piacentini

*Two Bridges*\* \*\*\* (2014) 14'26" – Andy Akiho

10. 1883
11. Audio Sun
12. 1909

TOTAL TIME: 62'06"

\*World Premiere Recordings, Commissioned by Duo Scorpio

\*\* Commissioned through a Grant from Chamber Music America

\*\*\* Commissioned through a Grant from The American Harp Society

Produced by Adam Abeshouse

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