

## M O R E      T O U C H

Music has always been an outlet for my experience: an ever-shifting medium for self-evaluation and growth between poles of turmoil and tranquility. In the end, a mirror to my inner self.

The musical environment of my childhood was key to the development of my voice. Being brought up in Veracruz, Mexico, I grew up with a pungent combination of Afro-Cuban traditions, Son Jarocho, folkloric marimba, rock of all sorts, and an intense classical conservatory culture. The music on this record is a kind of composite picture of these influences and experiences, an amalgamation of my past and present.

So writing this music became a process of inner search, backwards to my roots and forwards into my future. I was seeking a music of fluidity, flexibility, precision, and density, and yet also of silence and stillness and mystery. A music that allows seeming contradictions to strengthen not weaken its bonds. And above all, a music rich in imagined imagery.

This goal led me to a quartet with a quite unusual instrumentation: mallet percussion, percussion, drum kit, and bass. Essentially, a small percussion ensemble with bass, carving a space where rhythm, color and texture could flourish. I was seeking versatility in these roles and equality among players—where each distinct and indispensable voice could be celebrated, but the whole would somehow sum to well more than (us) four.

Kim Cass, on bass, provides a grounding element, maneuvering within different rhythmic dimensions in a complex manner, and yet sometimes becomes our leading, virtuosic voice.

Marcus Gilmore, on drum kit, shows the same level of flexibility: rhythmically exacting, and with full freedom to not only drive and shape the arc of the music, but add coloristic and textural depth to its fabric.

Mauricio Herrera, playing hand drums and percussion, adds an essential piece, rooted in the soil from which this music springs, but also shimmering above it in spots, poking out of the canopy.

Finally, my mallet percussion layer: the amplified vibraphone and marimba become vessels for tonal, rhythmic, melodic and harmonic imagery. At times, my instruments take their more expected (historical) roles in improvised music—including that of the “concert marimba”—but at other times I am really seeking to extend their range and sonic possibilities.

Some thoughts about the songs:

#### Unquiet Respect

A reggae soca-inspired composition. This groove-heavy song is reminiscent of the unquiet nature and party-like vibe of my hometown of Veracruz, where this rhythm was popular in the mid-'90s.

#### More Touch

This title track reflects on the connection between our inner and outer selves, with composed statements intertwining collective improvisations. With each silence, and each stroke, the ensemble becomes one organism guided by our idiosyncratic instincts. An ode to being in touch with the present moment.

#### Space For Hour

A play on words (hour/our) which alludes to the importance of the space between notes, between the words we speak, and between moments, which are, indeed, their own moments—moments carrying invisible energy through silent sound. And spaces creating anticipation, excitement, and momentum.

#### El Nahualli (The Shadow Soul)

The word *Nahualli* derives from the native Mexican language of Nahuatl. The meaning of the word refers to our shadow souls, our spirit animals. A malleable

duality is embedded in the belief of *Nahualli*. Shape-shifting. Transformation. Transfiguration.

### The Woman Who Weeps

This is dedicated to my aunt and godmother Gloria, who passed away in January of 2021. The title and emotion comes from the meaning of the Mother of Sorrows (Mater Dolorosa). The imagery presents a weeping woman turning her face toward Heaven. It stands for loss, grief, injustice and pain. It also represents acceptance and our search for comfort during moments of despair.

### Square Bimagic

The title refers to the mathematical concept Bimagic Square. A Bimagic Square happens when the square of each number replaces the original in a Magic Square. This process creates another Magic Square. The composition's structure comes from this mathematical design, also drawing inspiration from Cuban son and a piano montuno.

### Convergences

This draws inspiration from oceanic convergence zones, where different currents come together. There are two main fluid rhythmic cycles in this piece that depict such currents. The harmonic elements inspire the mystery, darkness, and uncertainty the ocean embodies, while the piece's culmination has all currents converging.

### Robbin

The title is an abbreviation for Robbinston, my husband's hometown in Maine. I find something magical and inspiring about this place, particularly in winter. In this two-part composition, the first section extrapolates my feelings about the snowy silent horizons of winter, and the second part springs into the wishful joy and renewal of summer.

### Sizigia (Syzygy)

The structure here draws from the concept of syzygy, the alignment of three or

more celestial bodies. Each section in this piece contains three rhythmic layers that complement each other. Drawing inspiration from Afro-Cuban grooves that pass through the filter of 13/16, the piece has a circular, rotational feel, exploring the nature of rhythmic consonance and dissonance. The closing section of the piece has all layers merging and bending, like a metaphorical diversion of light in an Einstein ring.

### And There Was Light

The core of this piece is carried by the Batá drums, which here refer to the Sky Father, the creator of human life and the sky. The spirit and hile the piece's culmination has all currents converging. sence of this short song represents the end of our journey, and our ability to persevere through adversity. The end of this journey begins our next...

Patricia Brennan

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Dedicated to my madrina and tía Gloria.