

Flourish

blackmoon
TRIO

featuring
Robin Wall Kimmerer



“All flourishing is mutual”

- Robin Wall Kimmerer



ABOUT FLOURISH

Flourish is an immersive journey into the heart of the natural world, where Black Moon Trio is joined by Robin Wall Kimmerer; scientist, decorated professor, NYT best-selling author, and enrolled member of the Citizen Potawatomi Nation. Together, they explore the profound, interwoven relationships between humans and the environment.

Influenced by Kimmerer's work as a scientist and Indigenous knowledge keeper, *Flourish* embraces nature not as something to be conquered or consumed, but as a living, breathing partner, whose wisdom is available to those who take the time to listen. Kimmerer's insights, expressed through her reflective and poetic voice, guide listeners to see the land as a giver: one that offers more than sustenance, but also lessons of gratitude, respect, and care. Her philosophy of reciprocity, as articulated in her works *Braiding Sweetgrass: Indigenous Wisdom, Scientific Knowledge and the Teachings of Plants* and *The Serviceberry: Abundance and Reciprocity in the Natural World*, informs every track. Perfect for reflection, moments of gratitude, or meditative practice, *Flourish* pairs music and spoken word to create sonic spaces that invite healing and balance.

This album is more than just music; it is an invitation to reconnect with the world around us. Guided by Robin Wall Kimmerer's wisdom, Black Moon Trio honors the living forces of the Earth, celebrating its fragility, majesty, and resilience. *Flourish* is a sonic love letter to the planet—gentle yet powerful, meditative yet awakening—a perfect soundtrack for those who seek solace and inspiration in the natural world.



① **GREETING** (0:14)
ROBIN WALL KIMMERER

② **“SKYWOMAN FALLING”**
FROM *BRAIDING SWEETGRASS* (6:14)
TEXT AND NARRATION BY ROBIN WALL KIMMERER

③ **TOCHCHI'NA** (2024) (8:42)
JEROD IMPICHCHACHAHAHA' TATE (B. 1968)
COMMISSIONED BY BLACK MOON TRIO & BRUSHWOOD CENTER
WORLD PREMIERE RECORDING



Tochchi'na is the Chickasaw word for the number three and became the title of this work commissioned by Black Moon Trio to represent the three performers. The work is loosely based upon a Choctaw church hymn that was composed in the 1800s. One very unique artistic result of European contact is the American Indian church hymn. As missionaries fanned out across Indian Country they became the first to document our Native languages and create translations of The Bible and other Christian texts, including church hymns. This led to a new series of hybrid music, composed by tribal citizens.

For Southeast American Indians (Choctaw, Chickasaw, Cherokee, Creek and Seminole) this hybrid style of music is now over 200 years old and contains a vast repertoire. The music is unmistakably Native and added a third category of traditional music alongside stomp dancing music and our old folk songs. *Tochchi'na* presents the Choctaw Hymn 53 as the centerpiece and is embedded within my abstractions and feelings of the ancient time in which it was composed.

— Jerod Impichchachaaha' Tate
www.jerodtate.com

④ **"GIFT ECONOMY"** (5:31)

FROM *THE SERVICEBERRY*

TEXT AND NARRATION BY ROBIN WALL KIMMERER

⑤ **BLOOM** (2017) (6:13)

KATHERINE RAWLINGS (B. 1979)

WORLD PREMIERE RECORDING



In *Bloom*, Australian composer Katherine Rawlings offers a richly textured exploration of growth, transformation, and emergence.

This work is a little like a personal meditation in composition. I wrote it by playing the violin and focusing on the different tone colors and melodic themes and motifs that most made me feel a sense of calm and enjoyment. The enjoyment that was felt included both auditory enjoyment – what I felt when listening to the sounds of the music as I was playing them; as well as physical enjoyment – what I felt when using variation in rhythm and tempo in the bowing arm, and what I felt through using variation in left hand positioning and other movements over the violin in the left hand. To put it simply, I wrote what felt good to play. This violin solo was then used as the basis for developing the interweaving piano and horn parts.

— Katherine Rawlings

www.katherine-rawlings.squarespace.com

The title *Bloom* is more than a metaphor; it is a structural and emotional blueprint. Rather than following a traditional form, the piece expands outward, mirroring the organic pattern of a flower's growth. Musical cells recur and evolve, sometimes gently, sometimes with sudden intensity, as though responding to unseen internal or external forces.



- ⑥ **“WITNESS TO THE RAIN”** (6:22)
FROM *BRAIDING SWEETGRASS*
TEXT AND NARRATION BY ROBIN WALL KIMMERER

- ⑦ **SOBRE LAS OLAS** (1888, 2025) (5:43)
JUVENTINO ROSAS (1868-1894)
ARRANGED BY JEREMY VIGIL
WORLD PREMIERE RECORDING



Sobre las Olas (Over the Waves) was composed in 1888 by Juventino Rosas, a prolific Mexican composer and violinist, whose works remain a significant part of the Mexican musical canon. The waltz’s enduring popularity comes from its fluid rhythm and its beautiful, sweeping melody, which elicits imagery of dancing waves, graceful movements, and the peaceful ebb and flow of the sea.

Just as waves rise and fall in a predictable rhythm, the structure of the waltz feels continuous and fluid. The rise and fall of the melodic lines evoke the motion of water, whether calm or tempestuous, while the ornamentations and dynamic shifts reflect the varying intensity of the waves themselves—sometimes serene, sometimes more passionate, but always in constant motion.

Whether through the waves of the sea or the gentle rhythm of life itself, Rosas captures the essence of nature’s motion and grace, making this piece not only a celebration of Mexican culture but a universal ode to the natural world.



- ⑧ **“THE HONORABLE HARVEST”** (1:38)
FROM *THE SERVICEBERRY*
TEXT AND NARRATION BY ROBIN WALL KIMMERER

- ⑨ **MOON RIVER** (1961, 2021) (3:33)
HENRY MANCINI (1924-1994)
ARRANGED BY DAN TURCANU



Originally written for the 1961 film *Breakfast at Tiffany's*, *Moon River*, composed by Henry Mancini with lyrics by Johnny Mercer, is one of the most iconic and enduring songs in American music.

The song is not just a beautiful ballad, but also a reflection of the natural world and its power to evoke feelings of longing and wonder. It paints the image of a peaceful, serene landscape under the light of a glowing moon, where the flowing water becomes a metaphor for life's journey and the pursuit of dreams.

Ultimately, *Moon River* is a musical tribute to the timeless and powerful forces of nature, inviting listeners to reflect on their own journeys, dreams, and the eternal rhythms of the Earth that guides them. It reminds us that, much like the river, our paths may be winding and uncertain, but the connection to something greater, whether it is the moon, the river, or the dreams they represent, offers comfort, guidance, and hope.



- ⑩ **"HOW WILL WE ANSWER?"** (3:35)
FROM *THE SERVICEBERRY*
TEXT AND NARRATION BY ROBIN WALL KIMMERER

- ⑪ **INDIANA DUNES** (2011) (8:31)
HARRY BULOW (B. 1979)



I composed *Indiana Dunes* for piano, violin, and horn in 2011 on commission from Greg Kostraba. The Indiana Dunes are sand dunes that appear along the southeastern portion of Lake Michigan and the northwestern coastline of Indiana. The poet Carl Sandberg once wrote, "They constitute a signature of time and eternity." In some places, the sand dunes rise as high as 180 feet. One dune called Mount Baldy is a favorite launching pad for hang glider enthusiasts. The piece is an attempt to reflect the unique character of the dunes and the busy populations that frequent its coastline. It begins with a sense of mystery by presenting a chordal design of perfect fifths stacked upon each other surrounded by sounds set in an atonal framework suggesting the early morning sunrise along the coastline. The work quickly moves on to a rolling piano accompaniment that speaks of water currents and growing activities of people and wildlife. The work culminates in a rhythmically robust and rather muscular presto reflective of the turbulent and sometimes unpredictable nature of the coastline of Lake Michigan.

— Harry Bulow
www.harrybulow.com





Black Moon Trio is a horn, violin, and piano ensemble redefining the chamber music experience through adventurous programming, community-centered education, and a commitment to equity in the arts. Founded in 2022 by Parker Nelson, Jeremy Vigil, and Khelsey Zarraga, the trio seeks to effect meaningful change by connecting with diverse audiences and amplifying underrepresented voices.

At the heart of Black Moon Trio's mission is the belief that classical music is for everyone. Through innovative performances, original commissions, and collaborations across artistic disciplines, they spotlight the work of composers of color, women composers, and others historically excluded from the classical canon. Their adventurous programming blends newly commissioned works with reimagined classics, interdisciplinary collaborations, and thought-provoking themes—crafting concerts that challenge traditional expectations while fostering a sense of inclusivity and discovery. Recent commissions include works by award-winning composers Jeff Scott, Stacy Garrop, and Gala Flagello. In addition to their own productions, Black Moon Trio has curated concert experiences for Connecticut Summerfest and the Ravinia Festival, expanding access to chamber music through immersive, community-informed programming.

Beyond the stage, Black Moon Trio inspires curiosity and creativity through engaging educational programs reaching thousands of participants each year. Their members bring extensive experience not only in chamber music performance, but also music education in social service settings, university-level workshops, multi-day residencies, and arts-integrated curriculum development. These collective strengths allow the trio to offer performances and learning experiences that bring curriculum to life through vivid, interactive musical experiences that invite participants to create, reflect, and lead.

Whether in concert halls, classrooms, or community spaces, Black Moon Trio invites listeners of all ages and backgrounds to experience classical music that echoes far beyond the final chord.

Photo Credit: SnoStudios, LLC



ROBIN WALL KIMMERER

Robin Wall Kimmer is a mother, scientist, decorated professor, and enrolled member of the Citizen Potawatomi Nation. She is the author of *The Serviceberry: Abundance and Reciprocity in the Natural World* and *Braiding Sweetgrass: Indigenous Wisdom, Scientific Knowledge and the Teachings of Plants*, which has earned Kimmerer wide acclaim. Her first book, *Gathering Moss: A Natural and Cultural History of Mosses*, was awarded the John Burroughs Medal for outstanding nature writing, and her other work has appeared in *Orion*, *Whole Terrain*, and numerous scientific journals. In 2022, *Braiding Sweetgrass* was adapted for young adults by Monique Gray Smith. This new edition reinforces how wider ecological understanding stems from listening to the earth's oldest teachers: the plants around us.

Robin tours widely and has been featured on NPR's *On Being* with Krista Tippett and in 2015 addressed the general assembly of the United Nations on the topic of "Healing Our Relationship with Nature." Kimmerer is a SUNY Distinguished Teaching Professor of Environmental Biology, and the founder and director of the Center for Native Peoples and the Environment, whose mission is to create programs which draw on the wisdom of both indigenous and scientific knowledge for our shared goals of sustainability. In 2022 she was named a MacArthur Fellow.

As a writer and a scientist, her interests in restoration include not only restoration of ecological communities, but restoration of our relationships to land. She holds a BS in Botany from SUNY ESF, an MS and PhD in Botany from the University of Wisconsin and is the author of numerous scientific papers on plant ecology, bryophyte ecology, traditional knowledge and restoration ecology. She lives on an old farm in upstate New York, tending gardens both cultivated and wild.

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The Serviceberry: Abundance and Reciprocity in the Natural World

As Indigenous scientist and author of *Braiding Sweetgrass* Robin Wall Kimmerer harvests serviceberries alongside the birds, she considers the ethic of reciprocity that lies at the heart of the gift economy. How, she asks, can we learn from Indigenous wisdom and the plant world to reimagine what we value most? Our economy is rooted in scarcity, competition, and the hoarding of resources, and we have surrendered our values to a system that actively harms what we love. Meanwhile, the serviceberry's relationship with the natural world is an embodiment of reciprocity, interconnectedness, and gratitude. The tree distributes its wealth—its abundance of sweet, juicy berries—to meet the needs of its natural community. And this distribution insures its own survival. As Kimmerer explains, "Serviceberries show us another model, one based upon reciprocity, where wealth comes from the quality of your relationships, not from the illusion of self-sufficiency."

As Elizabeth Gilbert writes, Robin Wall Kimmerer is "a great teacher, and her words are a hymn of love to the world." *The Serviceberry* is an antidote to the broken relationships and misguided goals of our times, and a reminder that "hoarding won't save us, all flourishing is mutual."



Braiding Sweetgrass: Indigenous Wisdom, Scientific Knowledge and the Teachings of Plants

A New York Times 100 Best Books of the 21st Century Readers Pick

#1 New York Times Bestseller

A Washington Post and Los Angeles Times Bestseller

As a botanist, Robin Wall Kimmerer has been trained to ask questions of nature with the tools of science. As a member of the Citizen Potawatomi Nation, she embraces the notion that plants and animals are our oldest teachers. In *Braiding Sweetgrass*, Kimmerer brings these two lenses of knowledge together to take us on “a journey that is every bit as mythic as it is scientific, as sacred as it is historical, as clever as it is wise” (Elizabeth Gilbert).

Drawing on her life as an indigenous scientist, a mother, and a woman, Kimmerer shows how other living beings—asters and goldenrod, strawberries and squash, salamanders, algae, and sweetgrass—offer us gifts and lessons, even if we’ve forgotten how to hear their voices. In a rich braid of reflections that range from the creation of Turtle Island to the forces that threaten its flourishing today, she circles toward a central argument: that the awakening of a wider ecological consciousness requires the acknowledgment and celebration of our reciprocal relationship with the rest of the living world. For only when we can hear the languages of other beings will we be capable of understanding the generosity of the earth, and learn to give our own gifts in return.

Brushwood Center

Brushwood Center works collaboratively with community partners, artists, health care providers, and scientists to improve health equity and access to nature in Lake County, Illinois, and the Chicago region. We engage people with the outdoors through the arts, environmental education, and community action. Brushwood Center's programs focus on youth, families, Military Veterans, and those facing racial and economic injustices.

Brushwood Center collaborates closely with community partners to offer art and nature programs with youth, families, Military Veterans, seniors, artists, and area residents. Our program strategy is rooted in the asset-based community engagement model, which is a bottom-up way of working with communities that focuses on community strengths and assets rather than on deficits and problems.

Specifically, Brushwood Center prioritizes building authentic, long-term relationships with community-based organizations and partners; collaborating with community assets to develop mutually beneficial programs and contributing resources where needed to advance the health of people and the planet; and supporting just and inclusive storytelling through diverse cultural and artistic platforms.



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9. **MOON RIVER** (1961) (3:33)
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TOTAL TIME: (56:14)

* WORLD PREMIERE RECORDING

BLACK MOON TRIO

PARKER NELSON, HORN

JEREMY VIGIL, PIANO

KHELSEY ZARRAGA, VIOLIN

NARRATION BY **ROBIN WALL KIMMERER**

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**BRUSHWOOD
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