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 - I. Flowing Rivers (3:58)
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First Light digital liner notes by Alan Klaus, trumpet

First Light is the culmination of nearly a decade of creative work that grew naturally out of my 2014 doctoral treatise, *A performer's guide to Canadian works for unaccompanied trumpet and solo trumpet with piano*. Shifting from research into creation, my goal was to commission leading Canadian composers and record an album of new works that broaden our national recital repertoire. As the music took shape, I was continually inspired by the depth, imagination, and artistry that define Canada's contemporary musical voice.

The project began with the first commission in 2016, but the path forward was far from linear. Pandemic shutdowns brought cancellations, recording delays, and the loss of a major commission. This unexpectedly made space for *Song of Hope*, which became the emotional heart of the album as a tribute to my father. During this period, I spent nearly two years refining my embouchure and reimagining my approach to sound, rediscovering the trumpet with a new sense of ease and resonance (thank you, Ryan Gardner!). And through it all, life changed profoundly: I became a father myself, shortly before losing my own. This album evolved alongside each of those transformations, gaining new weight, tenderness, and perspective with every step.

Intimate lyricism infuses much of the aesthetic of *First Light*, which gently transitions from the warmth of strings through lush piano before jumping to the bold, untethered energy of electronics. The album title is drawn from the first commission for this album, Allan Gilliland's *First Light Brings New Beginning*. *First Light* holds several further layers of meaning for me: it marks my debut solo album, the first commercial recordings of these vibrant works, and is a reflection of the emotional landscape and natural imagery that flow throughout the music.

Song of Hope for trumpet and strings

Pete Meechan (2013, 2015, arr. 2021)

Alan Klaus, Bb trumpet, **Nancy Dahn** and **Heather Kao**, violins, **Kate Reed**, viola, **Vernon Regehr**, cello, **Frank Fusari**, double bass

Pete Meechan's *Song of Hope* has touched countless audiences around the world as the anthem for **CancerBlows** and the **Ryan Anthony Foundation**. Originally written in 2013 as the middle movement of his *Milestone* cornet concerto, Pete notes on his website that "Ryan asked me if I could change the end from its current reflective ending to something more uplifting, and to title it *Song of Hope*, giving it much more meaning than I could have ever imagined."

In 2021, I asked Pete about recording *Song of Hope* as a tribute to my father, who had a blood cancer similar to Ryan. He agreed and generously offered to create a new arrangement for trumpet and strings. This instrumentation gave the piece a gentle warmth and intimacy that I strove to honour with a pure, floating sound throughout.

This track is dedicated to **Jurgen Klaus (1943-2024)** and was his favourite on the album. My father embodied hope: he survived a glacier fall at 75, went skydiving at 78, and lived far longer than his oncologist predicted. Free of fear and full of life to the end.

A backing track is available for trumpet performances with recorded strings

Waters of Life for trumpet, violin, cello, and piano

Robbie Teehan (2017)

Alan Klaus, Bb trumpet and flugelhorn, **Nancy Dahn**, violin, **Vernon Regehr**, cello, **Phil Roberts**, piano

I first met **Robbie Teehan** at the National Youth Orchestra of Canada in 2007, where he was the resident composer. He wrote a piece, *Red Tango*, for our brass section that I have subsequently programmed multiple times with my student groups. Robbie had moved to Los Angeles to score music for film and television and I'm grateful he accepted my commission to create this cinematic work of striking beauty and stunning textures. Robbie says that *Waters of Life* is a three-movement meditation on the emotional state of water and what it means to us humans as the giver of life.

I. Flowing Rivers (Bb trumpet)

The opening movement portrays what would be like to be carried away by water in a river ranging from gentle currents to violent rapids. Featuring rhythmic vitality and technical brightness, like sunlight on water, while fluid and constantly in motion.

II. Autumn Lakeside Rain (Bb trumpet with Soulo adjustable cup mute throughout)

This movement, which Robbie described as exploring "the beautiful chaos of gentle rainfall on the surface of the lake," feels suspended in time. The plucked strings and meticulously notated "raindrop" rhythms create a peaceful, meditative atmosphere; their precision giving rise to a natural, almost improvised freedom.

III. Ritual of Cleansing (flugelhorn)

The piece closes by uniting the physical and the spiritual as water becomes a symbol of purification and rebirth. Rooted in traditional cleansing rituals, the music evokes an ancient yet deeply personal sense of reconnecting to something larger than ourselves.

Backing tracks are available for trumpet performances with recorded strings and piano

Golden Hour for trumpet and piano

Cait Nishimura (2020, arr. 2021)

Alan Klaus, Bb trumpet and flugelhorn, **Phil Roberts**, piano

Cait Nishimura's *Golden Hour* captures that magical time just before sunset when everything glows with a golden shimmer. Inspired by two vivid sunsets she witnessed, in upstate New York and in Yosemite Park, the piece radiates natural beauty and wonder.

Originally written for horn and piano, Cait later arranged it for trumpet as a gift to her friend and podcast cohost **Dylan Maddix**. Maddix is a brilliant conductor on faculty with me at Memorial University and was one of my first trumpet students at Mount Allison University. With the composer's blessing, I lightly adapted the trumpet version further, raising the melody an octave in a few places and transitioning to flugelhorn twice more to symmetrically complement the warm opening.

The piece has become one of my favourite recital works to share with audiences. Its balance of accessibility and depth, with beautiful lines that challenge the player to sustain emotion and colour, has made it a favourite among my students as well.

First Light Brings New Beginning for trumpet and piano Allan Gilliland (2016)

Alan Klaus, Bb trumpet and flugelhorn, **Phil Roberts**, piano

The seed work for this album, **Allan Gilliland** wrote *First Light Brings New Beginning* for **Mysterious Barricades**, a cross-Canada concert series that raised awareness for suicide prevention. For four years, concerts were streamed live across the country from sunrise in eastern Newfoundland to sunset in western British Columbia. I was invited to perform a live fanfare from Signal Hill at sunrise for the broadcast from Newfoundland, but I wanted to create something more meaningful and suggested we commission and record a piece specifically for that moment.

This track is dedicated to my uncle, **Kevin Crumplin** (1964-1991), whose life was lost to suicide. For me, it represents a heart-wrenching journey of grief intertwined with beauty and the courage to face another dawn.

It was an honour to be invited to share a few ideas during the piece's creation and to watch Allan's vision unfold. His concept of darkness moving to light beautifully captures both the physical sunrise and the inner struggle toward hope. The work begins in shadow, with whispers of *The Last Post* embroiled in chromatic tension. The trumpet lines gradually grow brighter as light seeps in, reaching for joy and peace but never fully escaping the pull of pain.

Three Seasons for flugelhorn/trumpet and piano Bill Brennan (2021)

Alan Klaus, flugelhorn and Bb trumpet, **Bill Brennan**, piano

Newfoundland composer and pianist **Bill Brennan** wrote *Three Seasons* for this album in 2021, expanding three musical sketches from different times, different seasons, in his life into a cohesive three-part suite. I've always admired Bill's musicianship and ability to blur boundaries between styles, formality, and freedom.

The first movement, for flugelhorn, is light and jazzy, full of rhythmic ease and warmth. The middle movement turns piercing and dark with long trumpet lines often a sixteenth note away from the piano. After a moment of silent peace, the final section blossoms with divine gratitude reminiscent of a hymn. Bill won a 2022 NL Arts and Letters Award for *Three Seasons*.

Inventions for trumpet and electronics Andrew Staniland (2020-21)

Alan Klaus, trumpets

Andrew Staniland's *Inventions* emerged from our virtual collaboration during COVID lockdowns and brings the album into its most adventurous territory. Isolation, connection, and experimentation collided and the result is a set of five soundscapes that are raw, restless, and mesmerizing. Andrew expressively utilized extended techniques to help explore the interaction between acoustic and electronic voices, closing the album with an explosion of creative energy. Each invention inhabits a distinct sound world and can be performed in any combination. *Inventions* is also scored in a version for two unaccompanied trumpets.

1. **Sirens** (Bb trumpet)

The opening invention draws on the dual imagery of the enchanting sirens of the sea and the urgent wail of urban emergency vehicles. Pitch bends, glissandi, and vivid electronic textures conjure an atmosphere both seductive and alarming.

2. **Butterflies** (Bb trumpet with harmon mute)

A relentless arc of flutter-tongued texture portrays nervous energy and sensations of breathless anxiety. Meanwhile, the electronic sound of buzzing insects brings to mind butterflies with the danger of Hitchcock's *Birds* more than a garden of calm wings.

3. **The Secret Death Toll of [REDACTED]** (Bb and piccolo trumpets)

Powerful fanfares signal the dangers of war over a constant drone-based battlefield. Sections of singing through the trumpet, with didgeridoo-inspired vowel manipulation and unsettled unison multiphonics, layer humanity and warning over the unyielding Bb drone.

4. **Ghosts** (modified Bb trumpet)

A mix of improvisation with three different modified trumpet setups, *Ghosts* could serve as the soundtrack to a horror film while also summoning echoes from Andrew's earlier works.

5. **Rip** (Bb trumpet)

Mouthpiece pops and kiss inhalations introduce a dark, low theme that winds through a series of rapid variations, intensifying in both register and energy before erupting in a cascade of wild, upward "rips" and settling on the invention's recurring major third interval.

About the Artist

Alan Klaus is a versatile Canadian trumpeter praised for his "exquisite tone" and dynamic artistry. He recently released his debut solo album, *First Light*, on Centrediscs, featuring new Canadian repertoire for trumpet, including four commissions and two arrangements by six award-winning composers.

Equally at home on stage and in the studio, Klaus has appeared as a featured soloist with the PEI Symphony Orchestra and the Atlantic Band Festival, and has given recitals and masterclasses across North America. He has performed with ensembles including the Newfoundland Symphony Orchestra, Opera on the Avalon, Bozeman Symphony, Tallahassee Symphony, Orchestra London (Canada), the American Festival Orchestra on tour in China, the World of Winds, the International Youth Wind Orchestra, the National Youth Orchestra of Canada, and the National Youth Band of Canada.

Klaus brings the same commitment to performance as he does to education. He joined the faculty at Memorial University's School of Music in 2012, after previous appointments at Montana State University and Mount Allison University, where he was voted "Professor of the Year" in music. His students have gone on to professional ensembles, national competitions, and leading graduate programs.

Originally from London, Ontario, Klaus completed his doctorate at Florida State University under Dr. Christopher Moore. His treatise is titled "*A performer's guide to Canadian works for unaccompanied trumpet and solo trumpet with piano.*" With his solo album and wide-ranging collaborations, he continues to champion Canadian repertoire while engaging audiences with both virtuosity and lyricism.

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Musicians

Phil Roberts, piano: *Waters of Life, Golden Hour, First Light Brings New Beginning*

Nancy Dahn, violin: *Song of Hope and Waters of Life*

Vernon Regehr, cello: *Song of Hope and Waters of Life*

Bill Brennan, piano: *Three Seasons*

Heather Kao, violin: *Song of Hope*

Kate Read, viola: *Song of Hope*

Frank Fusari, double bass: *Song of Hope*

Audio/Visual

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The Canadian Music Centre is the catalyst that connects you to the ever-evolving world of Canadian musical creation through performance, education, and promotion. The CMC's Centrediscs label has been actively promoting the music of Canadian composers for over 40 years.

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