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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: September 6, 2011

**CAL PERFORMANCES PRESENTS THE KRONOS QUARTET IN TWO
DISTINCT PROGRAMS DURING THE 2011/12 SEASON,
OCTOBER 9 AND FEBRUARY 5 AT HERTZ HALL**

**October 9 concert honors composer Steve Reich on his 75th birthday and features
the Bay Area premiere of *WTC 9/11***

February 5 performance includes the Alim Qasimov Ensemble

BERKELEY, September 6, 2011—The incomparable **Kronos Quartet**, “the original rock band of string quartets” (*Washington Post*), returns to Berkeley’s **Hertz Hall** for two concerts this season: on **Sunday, October 9, 2011 at 7:00 p.m.** in a concert of works by Pulitzer Prize-winning **Steve Reich**, including the Bay Area premiere of the composer’s acclaimed *WTC 9/11* (2010), plus *Triple Quartet* (1936), selections from *The Cave* (1990-93), and *Different Trains* (1988); and on **Sunday, February 5, 2012 at 7:00 p.m.** the quartet will perform in collaboration with Azerbaijan’s **Alim Qasimov Ensemble** featuring celebrated *mugham* singer **Alim Qasimov** and his daughter **Fargana Qasimova**. The Kronos Quartet, comprised of **David Harrington** (violin and artistic director), **John Sherba** (violin), **Hank Dutt** (viola) and **Jeffrey Zeigler** (cello), have championed the creation and performance of new music for the string quartet, receiving numerous awards including the 2011 Avery Fisher Prize, given for outstanding achievement and excellence in classical music, and Sweden’s Polar Music Prize, recognizing exceptional achievement. No other musician or ensemble has won both prizes, let alone in a single year.

THE PROGRAM

On **Sunday, October 9, 2011** the Kronos Quartet will play four works by award-winning composer **Steve Reich**, three of which were written for Kronos. The quartet and the composer have a long, productive relationship, unsurprising given that “Reich’s influence is vast, reaching far outside classical composition to encompass jazz, rock, pop, electronic music, and hip-hop” (*The New Yorker*). The all-Reich program will open with *Triple Quartet* for amplified string quartet and pre-recorded tape, written for Kronos in 1998. The composition is known for “the

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chugging rhythmic energy, the enlivening harmonic slips and turns, the prevailing minor-key atmosphere with chromatic touches that indicate the continuing importance to the composer of his Jewish heritage” (*The New York Times*). Three selections from *The Cave*, a music and video work written in the early 90s and arranged for Kronos, follows. “The ingenious use of repetition to create ritualistic power is a hallmark of Mr. Reich’s style,” said *The New York Times* of *The Cave*. Reich’s wife, artist **Beryl Korot**, created the video element.

The program is highlighted by the Bay Area premiere of Reich’s latest work, *WTC 9/11*. Written in three movements and using recorded sounds and voices—including those of air traffic controllers, ambulance drivers and the composer’s neighbors in lower Manhattan—the composition is a dense, emotional work just 15 minutes long. “The piece wanted to be terse,” Reich has said of *WTC 9/11*. Following an intermission, the Kronos Quartet will play *Different Trains* (1988), a composition written for the ensemble that combines three string quartets (one live, two recorded) with the voices of the composer’s childhood governess, retired Pullman porters and Holocaust survivors. The music evokes Reich’s childhood cross-country rail trips in the years 1939–1942 and those of Jews in Europe during the same period, and is “a poignant and powerful score, wide in its emotional range and rich in purely musical terms” (*Gramophone*).

On **Sunday, February 5, 2011**, the Kronos Quartet will return to Berkeley for a performance utterly distinct from the October appearance, and one that showcases the quartet’s musical range and enthusiasm for global collaboration and experimentation. The concert opens with a brief set (repertoire to be announced), followed by the **Alim Qasimov Ensemble** (whose program will be announced from the stage). Then the two groups will join forces to play five pieces drawn from the repertoire of Azerbaijani singer-songwriters called *ashiqs*. The *ashiqs*, who learn their art in an oral tradition, portray the power of love and the pain of separation and often tell their stories with wry humor and searing irony. The five works to be played in Berkeley are *Köhlen Atim* (“My Spirited Horse”) by Jahangir Jahangirov; *Peyman Ettik* (“I Gave My Word”), unattributed; *Mehriban Olaq* (“Let’s Be Kind”) by Shafiga Okhundova; *Getme, Getme* (“Don’t Leave, Don’t Leave”) by Said Rustamov; and *Qashlarin Kamandir* (“Your Eyebrows are Bow-like”), unattributed. The string quartet arrangements for these works, created by Jacob Garchik for the Kronos Quartet in collaboration with Alim Qasimov, were commissioned by the

Aga Khan Music Initiative and the Columbia Foundation. The songs appeared on the 2010 album *Music of Central Asia Vol. 8: Kronos Quartet with Alim & Fragana Qasimov and Hodayun Sakhi*. “The Azerbaijani art of improvisation is very much alive in these songs, from the galloping rhythms of *Köhlen Atim* to the unbridled ululations of the lovesick lament, *Getme, Getme*” (NPR).

KRONOS QUARTET

The **Kronos Quartet** combines a spirit of fearless exploration with a commitment to expanding the artistic range of the string quartet. One of the most celebrated and influential groups of our time, Kronos has performed thousands of concerts worldwide, released more than 45 recordings, collaborated with the world’s most celebrated and eclectic composers and performers, and commissioned more than 750 new compositions and arrangements for string quartet.

The group was founded in 1973 by David Harrington, who remains as its artistic director. The ensemble has performed and recorded works by 20th-century masters, including Bartók, Shostakovich and Webern; contemporary composers, including Aleksandra Vrebalov and John Adams ; and jazz legends, including Ornette Coleman, Charles Mingus and Thelonious Monk. It also has established longstanding artistic collaborations with contemporary artists, such as Terry Riley, Henryk Mikolaj Górecki, Philip Glass, Osvaldo Golijov and Steve Reich.

In addition to the 2011 Avery Fisher Prize and Sweden’s Polar Music Prize, the Kronos Quartet has won dozens of awards and commendations from organizations worldwide, including a Grammy Award, ten Grammy Award nominations and recognition as “Musicians of the Year” in 2003 from *Musical America*. For more information, go to kronosquartet.org.

ALIM QASIMOV

Alim Qasimov was born in 1957 in Shamka, Azerbaijan, and lives today in Baku. Qasimov grew up hearing *mugham*—the complex, traditional vocal music of Azerbaijan—and singing it at weddings and for his own pleasure. By age 20 he left his work as a driver and oilfield worker to pursue a career in music, studying with three different *mugham* teachers

simultaneously; within a few years his hard work was rewarded, and he was heralded as a “living national treasure” of his homeland. “With his sublime renditions of Azerbaijan’s classical music, Alim Qasimov is one of the world’s great performers” (theartsdesk.com).

The connection between Qasimov and Kronos began in the 1990s but only bore fruit in the last few years. “When [music critic] Ken Hunt first introduced me to the amazing voice of Alim Qasimov 15 years ago, I was magnetized,” recalled David Harrington in 2008. “His voice drew me so close that it has become part of my own inner singing. Since that night, it has been my hope that Kronos could one day be able to perform with a singer of such passion and mastery. With the addition of [Qasimov’s daughter] **Fargana Qasimova** to this ecstatic musical landscape, things could not be more perfect. For Kronos, this night is a dream come true.”

Qasimov has appeared on 12 recordings released in the West and performed with Yo-Yo Ma and the Silk Road Ensemble. In recognition of Qasimov’s musical contributions to world peace, he was awarded the International IMC-UNESCO Music Prize in 1999. (Past winners include Yehudi Menuhin, Ravi Shankar, Olivier Messiaen and Daniel Barenboim.) He has also been named People’s Artist of Azerbaijan (the highest artistic rank in the country) and awarded the Azerbaijani Medal of Glory.

The **Alim Qasimov Ensemble** pairs Qasimov with his daughter, Fargana Qasimova, who also sings *mugham*, and a troupe of skilled musicians playing traditional Azerbaijani instruments including the *kamancha* (a bowed string instrument), the *tar* (a long-necked lute) and the *daf* (a Middle Eastern frame drum similar to a tambourine). When Alim Qasimov started the ensemble he added other instruments not traditionally associated with *mugham*, including the *gosha naghara* (a sort of conjoined double kettle drum) and *balaban* (a double-reed flute). “A lot of people told me it wasn’t a good idea” to add these instruments, Qasimov recalls, “but I had a feeling I wanted it that way.” His intuition paid off, and the Alim Qasimov Ensemble has been praised for its “formidable skill and talent [which] speak to the vitality of tradition-based music in contemporary Azerbaijan” (Asia Society, New York).

TICKET INFORMATION

Tickets for the **Kronos Quartet** on **Sunday, October 9, 2011** in Hertz Hall, and the **Kronos Quartet** and **Alim Qasimov Ensemble** on **Sunday, February 5, 2012** in Hertz Hall are priced at **\$50.00**. Tickets are available through the Cal Performances Ticket Office at Zellerbach Hall; at (510) 642-9988 to charge by phone; at www.calperformances.org; and at the door. Half-price tickets are available for purchase by UC Berkeley students. UC faculty and staff, senior citizens, other students and UC Alumni Association members receive a \$5 discount (Special Events excluded). For more information, call Cal Performances at (510) 642-9988, or visit the Cal Performances web site at www.calperformances.org.

For select performances, Cal Performances offers UCB student, faculty and staff, senior, and community rush tickets. Rush tickets are announced three hours prior to a performance and are available in person only at the Ticket Office beginning one hour before the performance; quantities may be limited. Rush ticket sales are limited to one ticket per person; all sales are cash only. Rush ticket prices are \$10.00 for UCB students; \$15.00 for UCB faculty and staff (UCB ID required) and seniors age 65 or older; and \$20.00 for all other community members. Information is available on Cal Performances' Facebook page and at 510-642-9988; press 2 for the rush hotline, three hours prior to a performance only.

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Cal Performances thanks Wells Fargo, The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, and Bank of America for their major support of the Season.

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CALENDAR EDITORS, PLEASE NOTE:

CAL PERFORMANCES PRESENTS

Sunday, October 9, 2011 at 7:00 p.m.

Hertz Hall, UC Berkeley Campus
Bancroft Way at Telegraph Ave., Berkeley

New Music

Kronos Quartet

David Harrington, violin

John Sherba, violin

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Hank Dutt, viola
Jeffrey Zeigler, cello

Program:

Reich/*Triple Quartet* (1936); Selections from *The Cave* (1990-93): “Machpelah Commentary 2”, “Ephraim Isaac Chanting” and “Interior Drone”; *WTC 9/11* (2010); and *Different Trains* (1988)

Tickets: \$50.00, available through the Cal Performances Ticket Office at Zellerbach Hall; at (510) 642-9988 to charge by phone; at www.calperformances.org; and at the door.

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Sunday, February 5, 2012, at 7:00 p.m.

Hertz Hall, UC Berkeley Campus
Bancroft Way at Telegraph Ave., Berkeley

New Music

Kronos Quartet
David Harrington, violin
John Sherba, violin
Hank Dutt, viola
Jeffrey Zeigler, cello

Alim Qasimov Ensemble

Alim Qasimov, vocal and *daf*
Fargana Qasimova, vocal and *daf*
Additional musicians to be announced

Program: The Kronos Quartet and the Alim Qasimov Ensemble will play individual sets as well as perform traditional Azerbaijan music together.

Tickets: \$50.00, available through the Cal Performances Ticket Office at Zellerbach Hall; at (510) 642-9988 to charge by phone; at www.calperformances.org; and at the door.

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