



Kronos Quartet: ***Fifty for the Future***



Thursday, January 24, 11am

Zellerbach Hall, University of California, Berkeley

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How to use this Engagement Guide

If you have photos or lesson plans to share, please let us know! Use #Kronos@Cal

We invite you to challenge yourself and your students to think with the curiosity and passion of the arts. This engagement guide is organized around four key artistic practices (as identified by the National Coalition for Core Arts Standards at <http://nccas.wikispaces.com/>)

Investigating: Questioning, exploring and challenging.

Imagining: Opening the door to what's possible, and even to what seems impossible.

Creating: Making artistic choices with a work of art in mind.

Connecting: Reflecting on both process and product and making connections to other aspects of life and study.

You'll be able to link to specific subjects that you or your students may want more information about. The Engagement Guide invites exploration before and after the performance, giving each student tools to make personal and meaningful connections during the show.

We've included a pre-performance engagement activity and a post-performance activity for artistic practice and reflection. By no means should you feel limited by these suggestions! Go, make art, learn more...and share your experiences where you can.

Artistic Literacy: Having the skills and knowledge you need to connect meaningfully with works of art—that's what we mean by artistic literacy. We think that means something different than knowing the names of all the different instruments musicians might play, or being able to reproduce the exact melodies you might hear during a show. To us at Cal Performances, it means you and your students will have a significant glimpse into the artistic process and will have a chance to try to solve the problems the artists aim to solve creatively. It means that the next time you see a performance, you'll be able to use these same insights to connect with a work of art through the artist's process and that this will deepen your experience as an audience member.

The artistically literate student audience member comes to understand that every artist draws from a core set of concepts skillfully chosen and applied in performance to create a work of art both unique to the artist, and connected to other works of art.

And along the way, we hope that students of all ages—including teachers and adult mentors—will be inspired to experiment with artistic decision-making and creativity themselves.

Enjoy the show!

Your ★ STARRING Role in the Theater



As an audience member, you are a STAR, too! You play an important role in the performance community. The artists need YOU in order to give you their best work.

S.T.A.R. Audiences

S = Support the artists by being attentive and focusing on the performers.

T = Tune in: listen and watch for understanding, and for the Kronos Quartet, listen for sounds or “musical” ideas you may not have heard before at a concert, especially from a string quartet.

A = Appreciate the performers by clapping at the right time. For example, when a scene or dance ends, or when the stage lights fade to dark.

R = Respect the performers and other audience members. At a performance, you, the others in the audience and the artists are sharing this experience together and are part of a performance community. Think about ways you can best support the community’s performance experience.

We know you will be a STAR today and will help you classmates shine too!

About the Kronos Quartet

For 45 years, San Francisco's Kronos Quartet – David Harrington (violin), John Sherba (violin), Hank Dutt (viola), and Sunny Yang (cello) – has combined a spirit of fearless exploration with a commitment to continually reimagine the string quartet experience. In the process, Kronos has become one of the world's most celebrated and influential ensembles, performing thousands of concerts, releasing more than 60 recordings, collaborating with many of the world's most intriguing and accomplished composers and performers, and commissioning over 1,000 works and arrangements for string quartet. Kronos has received over 40 awards, including the prestigious Polar Music and Avery Fisher Prizes. In 2018, they became the first US-based musicians to receive the WOMEX Artist Award.



Integral to Kronos' work is a series of long-running collaborations with many of the world's foremost composers, including Americans Terry Riley, Philip Glass, and Steve Reich; Azerbaijan's Franghiz Ali-Zadeh; Russia's Vladimir Martynov; Poland's Henryk Górecki; and Serbian-American Aleksandra Vrebalov. Additional collaborators have included Wu Man, Tanya Tagaq, Mahsa Vahdat, Trevor Paglen, Sam Green, Van Dyke Parks, múm, Dawn Upshaw, Noam Chomsky, Tom Waits, Asha Bhosle, Taraf de Haïdouks, and Howard Zinn.

On tour for five months per year, Kronos appears in the world's most prestigious concert halls, clubs, and festivals. Kronos is equally prolific and wide-ranging on recordings, including the Grammy and Latin Grammy-nominated *Nuevo* (2002) and 2004 Grammy-winner Alban Berg's *Lyric Suite*. Kronos' most recent releases include *Folk Songs*, featuring Sam Amidon, Olivia Chaney, Rhiannon Giddens, and Natalie Merchant singing traditional songs; the collaborative album *Ladilikan* with Trio Da Kali, an ensemble of Malian griot musicians assembled by Aga Khan Music Initiative; the collaborative album *Landfall* with Laurie Anderson; and *Clouded Yellow* by Bang on a Can founding composer Michael Gordon.

The nonprofit Kronos Performing Arts Association manages all aspects of Kronos' work, including the commissioning of new works, concert tours and home season performances, education programs, and a self-produced Kronos Festival. In 2015, Kronos launched *Fifty for the Future: The Kronos Learning Repertoire*, an education and legacy project that is commissioning—and distributing for free—the first learning library of contemporary repertoire for string quartet.

About Kronos Quartet's *Fifty for the Future*

In 2015, the Kronos Performing Arts Association launched *Fifty for the Future: The Kronos Learning Repertoire*, an education and legacy project that is commissioning—and distributing for free—the first learning library of contemporary repertoire for string quartet. Designed expressly for the training of students and emerging professionals, ten new works (five by women and five by men) are being composed each year over five years. Scores and parts, as well as supplemental learning materials that include recordings, videos, performance notes, and composer interviews, are available on [Kronos Quartet](#). Lead partner Carnegie Hall and an adventurous group of project partners, including presenters, academic institutions, foundations, and individuals, have joined forces with KPAA to support this exciting program.

Garth Knox's *Satellites*, Ken Benshoof's *sweeter than wine*, Mario Galeano's *Tolo Midi*, Rhiannon Giddens' *At the Purchaser's Option with variations*, Nicole Lizée's *Another Living Soul*, and Wu Man's *Four Chinese Paintings* were commissioned as part of the Kronos Performing Arts Association's *Fifty for the Future: The Kronos Learning Repertoire*, which is made possible by a group of adventurous partners, including Cal Performances, Carnegie Hall and many others.

At the SchoolTime show, you'll see student quartets from the Crowden School and the Oakland School for the Arts playing alongside Kronos Quartet.



Fifty for the Future SchoolTime program

COMPOSER

WORK

Severiano Briseño (arr. Osvaldo Golijov)	<i>El Sinaloense</i> (The Man from Sinaloa) +
Garth Knox	<i>Satellites: III. Dimensions</i> * Composed for <i>Fifty for the Future: The Kronos Learning Repertoire</i>
Ken Benshoof	<i>sweeter than wine: II. Postscript</i> * Composed for <i>Fifty for the Future: The Kronos Learning Repertoire</i> Performed by Crowden School Quartet Annika Lin , violin / Leila Yokoyama , violin / Mali Nguyen , viola / Meilani Huynh , cello
Mario Galeano Toro	<i>Tolo Midi</i> * Preview Composed for <i>Fifty for the Future: The Kronos Learning Repertoire</i>
Rhiannon Giddens (arr. Jacob Garchik)	<i>At the Purchaser's Option with variations</i> * Composed for <i>Fifty for the Future: The Kronos Learning Repertoire</i> Performed by Oakland School for the Arts Quartet Kayla Phan , violin / Raphaella Brown , violin / Izabelle Ito / viola / Ariadne Bashore-Walker / cello
Nicole Lizée	<i>Another Living Soul</i> * Composed for <i>Fifty for the Future: The Kronos Learning Repertoire</i>
George Crumb	<i>God-music from Black Angels</i>
Wu Man (arr. Danny Clay)	<i>Four Chinese Paintings</i> * IV. Traditional / Silk and Bamboo 与竹+ Arrangement of <i>Huanlege</i> for <i>pipa</i> by Wu Man , arranged for string quartet by Danny Clay Composed and arranged for <i>Fifty for the Future: The Kronos Learning Repertoire</i>

PROGRAM SUBJECT TO CHANGE

* Written for Kronos

+ Arranged for Kronos

Fifty for the Future Composers & Works

Severiano Briseño (1902–1988)

***El Sinaloense* (The Man from Sinaloa) (1943/arr. 2001)**

Arranged by Osvaldo Golijov (b. 1960)



Severiano Briseño

This raucous song about a drunken character from the western coastal state of Sinaloa was actually written by a man who lived on the opposite coast, in the city of Tampico. Severiano Briseño, who performed with Trio Tamaulipeco in the 1950s, reportedly began writing *El Sinaloense* at a bar in Mazatlán, in southern Sinaloa. The song was later made famous by Banda El Recodo de Don Cruz Lizarraga. It was a recording of this song by Banda El Recodo, with superstar singer/songwriter Juan Gabriel's vocals, that inspired Kronos and record producer Gustavo Santaolalla to try to capture the bright timbre and virtuosity of the *banda's* brass section.



Osvaldo Golijov

Osvaldo Golijov grew up in an Eastern European Jewish household in La Plata, Argentina. He was raised surrounded by Western classical music, Jewish liturgical and klezmer music, and the new tango of Astor Piazzolla. Golijov became met the Kronos Quartet at Tanglewood, and has since collaborated with the group on about 30 works. Golijov is the recipient of a MacArthur Fellowship, among many other awards.

Osvaldo Golijov's arrangement of Severiano Briseño's *El Sinaloense* was commissioned for the Kronos Quartet and appears on the Nonesuch recording *Nuevo*.

Garth Knox (b. 1956)

***Dimensions from Satellites* (2015)**



Garth Knox is one of today's leading performers of contemporary music, and his formative experience as a member of Pierre Boulez's Ensemble InterContemporain and then as violist of the Arditti Quartet has given him a comprehensive grasp of new music. Stimulated by the practical experience of working with contemporary composers such as Boulez, Ligeti, Berio, Xenakis,

and many others, he channels and expands this experimental energy when writing his own music.

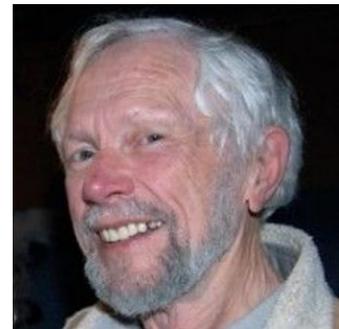
“Dimensions” is the third and final movement of *Satellites*, about which Knox writes:

“‘Dimensions’ deals with the many possible dimensions which surround us, represented by the physical movements of the bow through space. In the first dimension, only vertical movement is possible. In the second, only horizontal movement along the string is possible. Then only circular motion, then alternating between the two sides of the bow (the stick and the hair). The fun really starts when we begin to mix the dimensions, slipping from one to another, and the piece builds to a climax of spectacular bow techniques including the ‘whip’ and the ‘helicopter,’ producing a huge range of other-worldly sounds.”

Ken Benshoof (b. 1933)

***sweeter than wine* (2015)**

Composer/pianist Ken Benshoof was born in 1933 on a Nebraska farm. Primarily a composer of chamber pieces, Benshoof has received many commissions, most notably the Kronos Quartet for whom he has produced eight works. He also served as resident composer at San Diego’s Old Globe Theater over several seasons and at the Seattle Repertory Theater for a number of years.



About *sweeter than wine*, Benshoof writes:

“In the spring of 2015, David Harrington suggested I take another look at ‘Kisses Sweeter than Wine.’ I had put a refrain of that tune in the *Traveling Music* quartet in 1973, a work composed for Kronos. ... a natural outgrowth of an extensive interest in folk music and some aspects of popular American music, a fling with a five-string banjo, and a love of Dorian mode.

This year’s view is delicate, with tenderness. It is a gentle walk, nostalgic in its various moods, comfortable in its own quietness, warm in its strengths.”



Mario Galeano Toro (b. 1977)

***Tolo Midi* (2018)**

Mario Galeano Toro, born in Bogotá, has been focused over the past 15 years on researching Colombian tropical music and its diaspora throughout the continent. His search has resulted in influential tropicalista projects that range from roots music to experimental music, such as Frente

Cumbiero, Los Pirañas, and Ondatrópica. His projects have been released on around 10 vinyl records, and performed in more than 35 countries worldwide.

About *Tolo Midi*, Galeano writes:

“*Tolo Midi* is a piece influenced by the rhythmic and melodic universe of Cumbia, a musical style born in the Colombian Caribbean as a result of the encounter between indigenous American, African and European people. It is a rhythmic piece that wants to give the interpreter an immersion into syncopation and the fundamental legacy of Africa in America (be strict with accents!), while exploring native melodic phrasing from the Tolo, one of the names of the indigenous flutes that provided the melodic identity for Cumbia. Although Cumbia originated in Colombia, it spread impressively through the whole continent unlike no other style in the Americas. The piece could even be performed from California to Patagonia and be recognized as local.”

Rhiannon Giddens (b. 1977)

***At the Purchaser's Option with variations* (2016)**

Arranged by Jacob Garchik (b. 1976)

Rhiannon Giddens is best known as the lead singer, violinist, banjo player, and founding member of the Grammy-winning Carolina Chocolate Drops, an eclectic string band that routinely brings audiences to their feet. Her interest in country, blues, and old-time folk music began in the Piedmont area of North Carolina, where she was raised. Following on a highly acclaimed Town Hall performance in 2013, her first solo album, *Tomorrow is My Turn*, was released in 2015. She was named a MacArthur Foundation "Genius" Grant Winner in 2017. Kronos has performed with Giddens at the Brooklyn Academy of Music, at the Barbican in London, and at Texas Performing Arts in Austin, Texas.



Rhiannon Giddens' *At the Purchaser's Option with variations* is an instrumental variation of a song from her album *Freedom Highway* (Nonesuch, 2017), arranged by Jacob Garchik. She wrote the song after finding in a book a 19th-century advertisement for a 22-year-old female slave whose 9-month-old baby was also for sale, but “at the purchaser’s option.” This piece comes from thinking about what that woman's life might have been like.



Nicole Lizée (b. 1973)

Another Living Soul (2016)

Called a “brilliant musical scientist” and lauded for “creating a stir with listeners for her breathless imagination and ability to capture Gen-X and beyond generation,” Montréal-based composer Nicole Lizée creates new music from an eclectic mix of influences including the earliest MTV videos, turntablism, rave culture, glitch, Hitchcock, Kubrick, Lynch, 1960s psychedelia, and 1960s modernism.

She is fascinated by the glitches made by outmoded and well-worn technology, and captures, notates, and integrates these glitches into live performance.

Lizée’s compositions range from works for orchestra and solo turntablist featuring fully notated DJ techniques, to other unorthodox instrument combinations that include the Atari 2600 video game console, omnichords, stylophones, Simon™, and karaoke tapes. In the broad scope of her evolving oeuvre she explores such themes as malfunction, reviving the obsolete, and the harnessing of imperfection and glitch to create a new kind of precision.

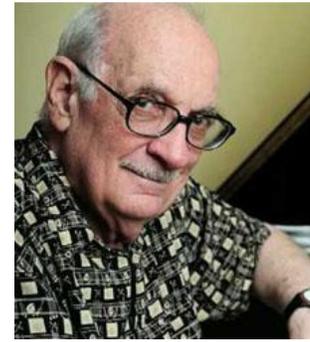
About *Another Living Soul*, Lizée writes:

“*Another Living Soul* is stop motion animation for string quartet. Considered one of the most complex and idiosyncratic art forms, stop motion demands imagination, craft, isolation, an unwavering vision, fortitude, and copious amounts of time. The act of beginning the process invites both angst at the daunting task that has just begun and a kind of zen acceptance of the labyrinthine road ahead.

“The earliest stop motion—those beings and worlds created by Harryhausen, Starevich, Clokey, et al—still impresses and inspires. Oozing creativity, their work has a rough-hewn beauty and a timeless enchantment.

“Throughout its evolution, the end result has always been incrementally imbuing vitality and life to something devoid of any such spark on its own. The close quarters, intimacy, and camaraderie of the people who work in this art form are mirrored by the scrutiny and care they afford their tiny subjects and the attention to minutiae required to render a work that is lifelike. The impossible becomes possible—souls emerge from where once there were none.”

George Crumb (b. 1929)
Black Angels (1970)



Things were turned upside down. There were terrifying things in the air . . . they found their way into Black Angels. —George Crumb, 1990

Black Angels is probably the only quartet to have been inspired by the Vietnam War. The work draws from an arsenal of sounds including shouting, chanting, whistling, whispering, gongs, maracas, and crystal glasses. The score bears two inscriptions: “*in tempore belli*” (in time of war) and “Finished on Friday the Thirteenth, March, 1970.”

Black Angels was conceived as a parable on our troubled contemporary world. The work portrays a voyage of the soul. The three stages of this voyage are Departure (fall from grace), Absence (spiritual annihilation) and Return (redemption).

The numerological symbolism of *Black Angels*, while perhaps not immediately perceptible to the ear, is nonetheless quite faithfully reflected in the musical structure. These “magical” relationships are variously expressed: e.g., in terms of length, groupings of single tones, durations, patterns of repetition, etc. . . . There are allusions to tonal music: a quotation from Schubert’s *Death and the Maiden* quartet; an original *Sarabanda*; the sustained B-major tonality of *God-music*; and references to the Latin sequence *Dies Irae* (Day of Wrath). The work abounds in conventional musical symbolisms such as the *Diabolus in Musica* (the interval of the tritone) and the *Trillo Di Diavolo* (the Devil’s Trill, after Tartini).

Black Angels appears on Kronos’ Nonesuch recording of the same name which was released in August 1990.



Wu Man (b. 1963)
Four Chinese Paintings (2015)
Arranged by Danny Clay (b. 1989)

Recognized as the world’s premier *pipa* virtuoso and leading ambassador of Chinese music, Grammy Award–nominated musician Wu Man has carved out a career as a soloist, educator, and composer giving her lute-like instrument—which has a history of over 2,000 years in China—a new role in both traditional and contemporary music. Having been brought up in the Pudong School of pipa playing, one of the most prestigious classical styles of Imperial China, Wu Man is now recognized as an outstanding exponent of the traditional repertoire as well as a leading interpreter of contemporary pipa music by today’s most

prominent composers. Wu Man's efforts were recognized when she was named *Musical America's* 2013 Instrumentalist of the Year, the first time this prestigious award has been bestowed on a player of a non-Western instrument.

Born in Hangzhou, China, Wu Man was accepted into the Central Conservatory of Music in Beijing at age 13, at the, where she became the first recipient of a master's degree in pipa., Her audition was covered by national newspapers and she was hailed as a child prodigy, becoming a nationally recognized role model for young pipa players. In 1985 she made her first visit to the United States as a member of the China Youth Arts Troupe. Wu Man moved to the U.S. in 1990 and currently resides with her husband and son in California.

About *Four Chinese Paintings*, Wu Man writes:

"After two decades of collaborating with the Kronos Quartet, I am finally beginning to understand Western string instruments. With the group's encouragement and support, I was able to create this—my first work for string quartet.

"*Four Chinese Paintings* is a suite consisting of four short pieces which, taken together, resemble a set of portraits of traditional music from around the country. In Chinese traditional music, instrumental pieces often have poetic titles to express their content and style. I decided to continue this tradition with this collection.

"The inspiration for this suite came from styles of traditional music in China familiar to me, including Uyghur Maqam of Xinjiang province, a pipa scale from the 9th century, and the Silk-and-Bamboo music, or teahouse music, from my hometown of Hangzhou.

"The first two movements, 'Gobi Desert at Sunset' and 'Turpan Dance,' are adapted from the Uyghur Maqam 'Chebiyat.' In 2008, thanks to the Aga Khan Music Initiative, I had the opportunity to learn these pieces directly from the Uyghur musicians Abdullah Majnun and Sanubar Tursun. The third movement, 'Ancient Echo,' is based on a scale found among the oldest tunes for pipa. The fourth movement, 'Silk and Bamboo' is a variation on the tune 'Joyful Song' (*Huanle*) from the collection of Silk-and-Bamboo music.

"I feel quite grateful to be able to bring these old styles of traditional music—Uyghur Maqam, Jiangnan Silk-and-Bamboo music, and ancient pipa music—into the repertoire of Western string ensembles. The left-hand portamento, or sliding, technique called for here are quite distinct from the types of expression found in Western music. I hope that audiences will come to better understand music from China through these four stories told in regional dialects.

"I'd like to thank Kronos for their trust and encouragement, for letting me be a part of their *Fifty for the Future* project, and for giving me this opportunity to share my musical experiences with young string quartets around the world!"

Artistic Concept: Music

“Paints” Emotions and Ideas

How do the Fifty for the Future composers experiment with the musical instruments of the string quartet to create compositions that challenge audience expectations and vividly “paint” emotions and ideas?



For hundreds of years, audiences, musicians and composers agreed that certain musical instruments being played in specific ways were needed to create music. Over the past 150 years, however, composers and musicians have found new ways to make new musical sounds from instruments and new ways to combine the sounds that different instruments make as well.

The experimental journeys of modern composers opens up music in a different way for audiences to listen. Whatever the inspiration for a new piece of music—and in this concert, the Kronos Quartet introduces music from a variety of inspiring sources—the composers aim to mix sounds, instruments, and different ways of playing them into musical compositions that invite audiences to hear (and see, through unexpected ways of playing instruments) new ways of listening to music.

As you listen to the concert, notice what new sounds or musical “ideas” you hear. And if you’ve heard a string quartet before, how is this performance different?

“I’VE ALWAYS WANTED THE STRING QUARTET TO BE VITAL, AND ENERGETIC, AND ALIVE, AND COOL, AND NOT AFRAID TO KICK ASS AND BE ABSOLUTELY BEAUTIFUL AND UGLY IF IT HAS TO BE. BUT IT HAS TO BE EXPRESSIVE OF LIFE. TO TELL THE STORY WITH GRACE AND HUMOR AND DEPTH. AND TO TELL THE WHOLE STORY, IF POSSIBLE.”

DAVID HARRINGTON, FOUNDER KRONOS QUARTET

Instruments in a String Quartet

In the second half of the 18th century, the emergence of chamber music (pieces written for a small group of instruments and performed in a small room or chamber) created the demand for the string quartet.

Mimicking the range of voices in a vocal choir, the string quartet includes two violins and a viola for the soprano, alto and tenor voices, and a cello for the bass or low end. String quartets create a sound profile that is comparable in expression to a full orchestra but offer greater independence for each musician.

Together, these “voices” create musical conversations in which every instrument has something to say. Although quartets can include any combination of instruments, most classical quartets feature a cello, a viola and two violins.

Violin

The violin is a small four-stringed instrument held under the chin and played with a bow or plucked with fingers. The strings stretch from the tailpiece across the bridge to the tuning pegs. A string quartet uses two violins. As the smallest instruments in the quartet, violins offer the highest voice. The soaring sound the violin produces allows melodies and harmonies to stand out. Players also use techniques such as vibrato, tremolo and pizzicato to create a rich musical voice.



David Harrington
violin



John Sherba
violin



Hank Dutt
viola

Viola

The viola is slightly larger than the violin, with strings that are tuned five notes lower. Violas offer a unique voice in the string quartet, providing a rich dark tone, which is in direct contrast to the bright tone of the violin. A viola can play notes that are almost as high as a violin; however, these notes will not have the same penetrating tone, making for a more distinct voice in the ensemble.

Cello

Adding the lowest voice to the string quartet, the cello provides a smooth and rich sound. Cellos are much bigger than the viola or violin, with a thick body and thick strings that are bowed to produce deep low notes. Traditionally, the cello was held between the knees; however, at the end of the 20th century, a spike was added to the cello, allowing it to stand on the floor. The cello produces the bass voice in the string quartet.



Sunny Yang
cello



Resources

Kronos Quartet: <https://www.kronosquartet.org/>

(For Kronos Quartet information, upcoming performances, music clips, discography and more.)

Fifty for the Future music clips: <https://www.kronosquartet.org/fifty-for-the-future>

Video Clips:

About *Fifty for the Future*: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9vgGnXzdz4U>

Interview with Ken Benshoof: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=olcof7usaf4>

Interview with Rhiannon Giddens: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=G7N1v2MLXKc>

Interview with Garth Knox: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=knoyMI5zc4k>

Interview with Nicole Lizée: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dYyMO3fADqQ>

Interview with Wu Man: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QEnqliHBQbw>

Kronos on Sesame Street: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Qj_MzFstr6c

Books about String Quartets:

Eisler, Edith. *21st Century String Quartets Book*. String Letter Publishing, 2000.

Griffiths, Paul. *The String Quartet: A History*. Thames and Hudson, 1985.

Griffiths, Paul. *Modern Music and After*. Oxford University Press, 2011.

Children's Books:

Ardley, Neil. *DK Eyewitness Books: Music*. DK Children, 2004.

Elliott, Katie. *The Fun Factory Violin Book: Fun, Facts, and Puzzles for Violin Players Every-where*. Boosey and Hawkes, 2004.

Wilson, Clive. *The Kingfisher Young People's Book of Music*. Kingfisher, 1999.

Other Local String Quartets:

Alexander String Quartet – <http://www.asq4.com/>

Del Sol Quartet – <http://delsolquartet.com/>

Thalea String Quartet – <https://www.thaleastringquartet.com/>

Telegraph Quartet – <http://www.telegraphquartet.com/>

Friction Quartet – <https://www.frictionquartet.com/>

Quartet San Francisco – <https://www.quartetsanfrancisco.com/>

Turtle Island Quartet – <https://turtleislandquartet.com/>

Real Vocal String Quartet – <http://www.rvsq.com/>

Local Organizations Presenting String Quartets:

Cal Performances – calperformances.org

San Francisco Performances – <https://sfperformances.org/>

Berkeley Symphony – www.berkeleysymphony.org

Oakland East Bay Symphony – <http://oebs.org/>

San Francisco Symphony – www.sfsymphony.org

Engagement Activities

ARTISTIC CONCEPT: LISTENING FOR & MAKING NEW SOUNDS **Engagement Activity #1 (Pre-performance)**

Guiding Questions

How can we listen closely in order to hear what we might never have heard before?

How can we discover new sounds from familiar objects?



Artistic Literacy Tool Box

Close listening and observation. Tempo. Pitch. Volume. Rhythm. Composition.

Overview

Time needed: 30-40 mins (can be extended with layers of exploration)

Students will explore observing and listening closely, will create new or unexpected sounds from familiar objects, then create and share a sound composition.

Supplies and Prep

A variety of classroom objects at students' desks.

Writing implements and journals or paper.

Instructions

Step 1 Looking with New Eyes / Listening with New Ears

- Stand up and move slowly around the classroom, looking at the objects around you. Even though you may have seen some of the items in the room many times, try to imagine that you're seeing these things for the first time. Take time to look closely at certain things. What do you notice that you may not have seen before?
 - Stop for a moment and listen closely to the sounds around you. Maybe you hear the sounds of your classmates' footsteps, or voices from the class next door, or traffic from the road outside.
 - Try listening closely with "new ears." Forgetting for a moment they are students talking next door, what sounds do you hear?
 - Is the sound high pitched or low, soft or loud, fast or slow, rising or falling?
 - How does the sound make you feel? What emotions or ideas come up when you listen closely to this sound?
 - Can you make the sound with your body? For example, snapping or clapping your hands or tapping your feet? Or using your voice? What rhythms do you discover in the sound?
 - Experiment this way with a few more sounds you hear.

Step 2 Creating New Sounds from Familiar Objects

- Return to your desk. Pull out two familiar items and place them in front of you. For example, maybe you have a book, a pen and some paper.
- Experiment with the different sounds you can make with these objects. What are the different ways you can ruffle, crush, or smooth out the paper to make different sounds? How can you tap, scratch or rub your pen to create a variety of sounds?
- After exploring the many different sounds you can call forth from the object, choose three or four favorites and practice them again several times.
- Challenge yourself: How loud or fast can you make the sound? What kind of feeling do you get when you “play” it fast? When you play it slow? Choose *how* to play your sounds.
- Decide on the order in which you’d like to play your sounds. Rehearse this a few times.
- Find a partner and perform your sound composition for them. Try to listen very closely to your partner’s sounds. (You can close your eyes.)
- What do the sounds bring up for you? How do they make you feel?
- Written reflection: What did you notice about creating and listening to your sound pieces?
- Back in the class group: Share the reflections you wrote.

Step 3 Addressing Expectations & Preparing for the Performance

Have you ever had an idea in your mind about a place you’d never been to, but when you got there it was different from how you’d imagined it? Or maybe you see a photo of a musical instrument you’ve never heard before and think it will sound a certain way, but when you actually hear it played the sound it makes surprises you?

We do this all the time – create expectations of what we’ll see and experience using the memories and knowledge we already have. But this can sometimes get in our way of fully participating in a new experience.

When you come to the Kronos Quartet SchoolTime performance, you may have a certain expectation of a string quartet concert, but we encourage you to open your mind (and ears!) to the music you’ll hear.

Activity: Expectations for Concert-going: Discuss what each student already knows or thinks about string quartet concerts and how this concert will be different from what they might expect. Chart pad expectations (it’s okay if expectations include worrying that it will be

“boring” or “like classical music”). If your students are musicians, ask them to review the concert process. What did they have to do to prepare for a concert?

Sample Questions for conversation

- When you hear that we’re going to see a string quartet playing a concert, what do you guess we might be seeing?
- What kinds of instruments do you think we might see the musicians playing on stage?
- What else do you think will be on stage besides musicians and their instruments?

In closing:

Let your students know that the music they will be hearing is not like most music they may have heard string quartets play. The composers invented new sounds for the musicians to make to offer audiences fresh ways of experiencing ideas and emotions expressed in their works. Encourage students to accept each moment of the concert as a new experience and see what is interesting or strange to them. Invite them to listen for new sounds they hear coming from instruments with which they may or may not already be familiar.

See you at Cal Performances’ Zellerbach Hall on Thursday, January 24 at 11am for the SchoolTime performance of Kronos Quartet’s *Fifty for the Future*!



REFLECTING ON THE PERFORMANCE

Engagement Activity #2 (Post-performance)

Time needed: 30-60 minutes

Students will reflect on what they saw and heard, thought and felt during the performance, and will make connections between what they did in their pre-performance activity and what they experienced at the performance.

Supplies and Prep

- Writing materials for students (paper, writing implements, journal)
- Space for students to stand and move in a circle together.

Reflection

Step 1 **Embodying Sounds & Images from the Show**

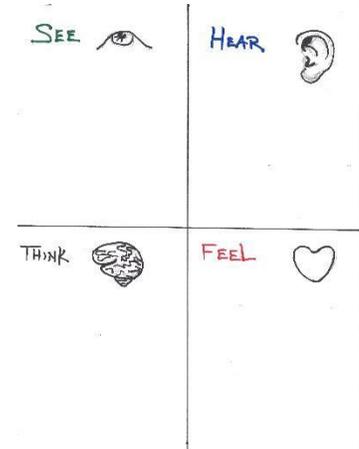
- Think of a new sound you heard in the performance. On the count of three, everyone make your sound at the same time.
- Now, remember a movement you saw in the show. On the count of three, everyone do your movement at the same time.
- Standing in a circle, go around and each person make your sound. (You can make your sound with your voice, or body.)
- After each person makes their sound, the whole group repeats the sound.
- Now, go around and each person shows their movement using their whole body. Our whole group will repeat the movement or sound.



Step 2 **Journaling and/or drawing reflection**

- Think about what you **saw** during the performance. Right now, just remember things you actually saw with your eyes, not what you might have seen in your imagination. Write down and/or draw or doodle some things you saw.
- Remember what you **heard** during the performance. Again, focus on what your ears actually heard, not what you might have imagined among the sounds. Write down and/or draw or doodle some things you heard.

- c) Now, let's bring in what we **thought** and imagined. Write down, draw or doodle some things you thought about or imagined during the performance.
- d) How did you **feel** during the performance? What emotions or feelings came up as you watched the musicians and heard the music? Write about and/or draw or doodle these.
- e) On a white board or easel sheet make four quadrants, and title them See/Hear/Think/Feel. As a class, share some things you saw first. (Write these in the See quadrant. If students share something they interpreted or imagined, remind them to share something they actually saw with their eyes.) Now, share some things you heard... some things you thought ... some things you felt during the performance. (Capture these in each of the quadrants.)



Step 3

Class Discussion Questions

- What did you expect the performance to be like? How did you connect this with what you actually experienced at the performance?
- What in the show make you think of things you did during your pre-performance activities?
- What surprised you? What seemed a little familiar? What seemed really strange?
- What questions would you ask the artists if you could? What artistic advice might you share with someone who was going to see the performance?





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For information on supporting our Artistic Literacy (Education & Community) Programs, contact Sarah Sobey. Phone: 510.643.7053 / Email: ssobey@calperformances.org.



About Cal Performances and the Cal Performances Classroom

The mission of Cal Performances is to produce and present performances of the highest artistic quality, enhanced by programs that explore compelling intersections of education and the performing arts. Cal Performances celebrates over 100 years on the UC Berkeley Campus.

What is a Cal Performances Classroom?

Your classroom, of course!

The arts are an endlessly replenishable resource for a lifelong love affair with thinking, learning and feeling across disciplines and cultures. They connect fluidly with curriculum throughout the school years, and – perhaps with more endurance – they connect us to ideas and reflection on human experience that can't be easily expressed any other way.

Each season at Cal Performance, you will find a menu of compelling performances and classroom opportunities for any age. You can create your Cal Performances classroom through any or all of our artistic literacy programs for grades K-12.

Cal Performances holds artistic literacy on a par with language and numerical literacy. Those who are artistically literate hold the keys to a lifelong engagement with the arts, able to unlock and make personal connections to any work of art, regardless or level of familiarity with the work and the artists.

Artistic literacy skills are developed in the Cal Performances classroom as students and teachers are engaged in the artist's process. These skills are embedded in everything we do, from pre-performance talks to community conversations to teacher workshops and artist visits to the classroom.