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[Press Room](#)



Images of Kronos Quartet, Rinde Eckert, and Vân-Anh Võ are available for download from the Cal Performances [press room](#).

**CAL PERFORMANCES AT UC BERKELEY PRESENTS
KRONOS QUARTET, RINDE ECKERT, AND VÂN-ÁNH VÕ
IN A FULLY STAGED PRODUCTION
OF THE VIETNAM WAR OPUS *MY LAI*
BY JONATHAN BERGER AND HARRIET SCOTT CHESSMAN
7PM, SUNDAY, MARCH 4, 2018**

Part of Cal Performances' 2017/18 Berkeley **RADICAL *Vaulting Walls*** programming strand

**Extensive public programs include a post-performance Catharsis Café
for audience members, Panel Discussion with the artists,
and companion film series at BAMPFA**

Berkeley, January 26, 2018—Cal Performances at UC Berkeley presents **Kronos Quartet**, tenor **Rinde Eckert**, and Vietnamese multi-instrumentalist **Vân-Anh Võ** in a fully staged production of *My Lai*. A monodrama for tenor, string quartet, and Vietnamese instruments, a collaboration of composer **Jonathan Berger** and librettist **Harriet Scott Chessman**. The work, which debuted in 2015, revisits the infamous My Lai Massacre of 1968, when American soldiers killed hundreds of unarmed

villagers during the Vietnam War. The story is told from the perspective of the helicopter pilot who, with his two other crew members, tried to intervene to stop the slaughter, and was later vilified for reporting it. Berger's score, which unfolds over three acts, blends Eckert's voice with the sonorities of the string quartet with traditional Vietnamese percussion and string instruments, digitally processed sounds such as helicopters and voices, and samples of popular music from the era. The performance takes place Sunday, March 4 at 7pm in Zellerbach Hall.

The production is emblematic of the depth and daring represented in the works in this season's *Vaulting Walls* programming strand, which encourages theatergoers to ponder the greatest concerns of humanity. The creators of *My Lai* ask audience members to recall one of the nation's most shameful moments, while reflecting on all people's roles as witnesses and bearers of history. "I think *My Lai* distills some of the most positive aspects of humanity, at the same time as it recognizes a senselessly destructive event that caused immense suffering," says Kronos Quartet's artistic director and violinist David Harrington. "Jonathan Berger's *My Lai* creates a moral, sonic counterbalance to the awful event." This activist/humanist role is a familiar one for Kronos, which Harrington founded in 1973 after first hearing George Crumb's *Black Angels*, a meditation on the horrors of the Vietnam War. An art installation by project advisor, artist, and veteran Drew Cameron of Combat Paper will be on display in the Zellerbach Hall lobby featuring images from the production printed on paper made from discarded military uniforms. Cal Performances plans to make a special effort to invite veterans of all ages to attend the performance of *My Lai* as well as the associated public programs.

Following the performance, a Catharsis Café reception is planned on the Zellerbach Hall mezzanine, to give patrons an opportunity to discuss and reflect on the powerful and often troubling themes explored in the work. The reception is free to ticket holders and complimentary refreshments will be offered. In addition, the creative team behind *My Lai*—composer Jonathan Berger, librettist Harriet Scott Chessman, Drew Cameron of the Combat Paper Project, and performers Rinde Eckert, Vân-Ánh Võ, and David Harrington—will convene to discuss the creation of the work in a Public Forum in the Osher Theater of the Berkeley Art Museum and Pacific Film Archive (BAMPFA), on Saturday, March 3 at 4pm. The forum is presented in collaboration with BAMPFA, which also hosts the companion film series *Documenting Vietnam: Self-Portraits of America at War* in conjunction with Cal Performances' presentation of *My Lai*. The two-month-long film series runs from February 28

through April 29, and features Vietnam War-themed documentaries by Werner Herzog, Errol Morris, Emile de Antonio, and others. Admission to the Public Forum is free, and BAMPFA film ticket prices range from \$5–\$13. Film tickets are now available at bampfa.org/documentingvietnam/tickets and the full series description will be posted in early February at bampfa.org/program/documenting-vietnam.

Ticket Information

Tickets for *My Lai, with Kronos Quartet, Rinde Eckert, and Vân-Anh Võ* on Sunday March 4, 2018 at 7pm in Zellerbach Hall range from \$36–\$74 (prices subject to change). Half-price tickets are available for UC Berkeley students. Tickets are available through the Ticket Office at Zellerbach Hall, at (510) 642-9988, at calperformances.org, and at the door. For more information about discounts, go to calperformances.org/discounts.

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CALENDAR EDITORS, PLEASE NOTE:

CAL PERFORMANCES PRESENTS

Sunday, March 4, 7pm

Zellerbach Hall
Bancroft Way at Dana Street,
UC Berkeley campus

New Music

My Lai

Fully Staged Production

Kronos Quartet

Rinde Eckert, tenor

Vân-Anh Võ, Vietnamese instruments

Jonathan Berger, composer

Harriet Scott Chessman, librettist

Program: This fully staged collaboration by composer Jonathan Berger and librettist Harriet Scott Chessman explores the aftermath of the My Lai Massacre—a tragic episode in the Vietnam War when American soldiers killed hundreds of unarmed villagers—from the perspective of the helicopter pilot who tried to intervene. Berger’s score blends Rinde Eckert’s voice with the strings of the Kronos Quartet and traditional Vietnamese instruments played by Vân-Anh Võ, as well as an electronic soundscape of helicopters, voices, and snippets of American blues.

Berkeley RADICAL: This performance is part of Cal Performances’ *Vaulting Walls* thematic programming strand. *Vaulting Walls* artists boldly challenge us to expand our understanding of the world around us, to vault past the limitations of conventional thought and break through barriers that confine us. More information at calperformances.org/berkeley-radical-vaulting-walls.

Tickets: \$36–\$74 (prices subject to change)

Residency Activities:

Panel Discussion
Saturday, March 3, 4pm
Admission Free

Berkeley Art Museum and Pacific Film Archive
Barbro Osher Theater
2155 Center Street, Berkeley

The creative team behind *My Lai*—composer Jonathan Berger, librettist Harriet Scott Chessman, Drew Cameron of the Combat Paper Project, and performers Rinde Eckert, Vân-Anh Võ, and David Harrington of Kronos Quartet—convene to discuss the work.

Post-performance Catharsis Café
Sunday, March 4

Zellerbach Hall Mezzanine

Catharsis Café receptions offer an opportunity for audience members to discuss and reflect on powerful works presented during the season, directly after a performance, on the Zellerbach Hall mezzanine. Free to ticket holders. Complimentary refreshments will be offered.

Film Series at the Berkeley Art Museum and Pacific Film Archive (BAMPFA):

Wednesday, February 28, 7pm

***In the Year of the Pig, Emile de Antonio (US 1969)*, restored 35mm print**

This Academy Award–nominated documentary makes the case against US intervention in Vietnam, using an incendiary montage style. “An explosive analysis of the American war machine” (Wisconsin Center for Film and Theater Research).

Friday, March 2, 7pm

***Interviews with My Lai Veterans, Joseph Strick (US 1970)*, restored 35mm print**

Introduction by Harriet Scott Chessman, novelist and librettist for *My Lai*

Strick’s investigative documentary spotlights five veterans who took part in the US military’s infamous My Lai Massacre, and opened the public’s eyes to the atrocities of the Vietnam War. Shown with Frederick Wiseman’s *Basic Training* and Appalshop’s *Whitesburg Epic*.

Saturday, March 3, 5:30pm

Winter Soldier, Winterfilm Collective (US 1972)

Introduction: David Harrington, Kronos Quartet

In Person: Peter Gessner

This record of testimony about American war crimes “may be the most important account we have of America’s tragic encounter with Vietnam... Remains essential viewing” (*Chicago Reader*). With Peter Gessner’s 1966 short film *Time of the Locust*, featuring music by Morton Feldman.

Sunday, March 11, 2pm

Hearts and Minds, Peter Davis (US 1974)

This Academy Award–winning documentary “holds a mirror up to our national conscience” (Judith Crist), revealing the effects of the Vietnam War on both the North and South Vietnamese as well as Americans at home. With Carolee Schneemann’s 1966 short film *Viet-Flakes*, featuring sound by James Tenney.

Wednesday March 15, 7pm

***No Vietnamese Ever Called Me Nigger*, David Loeb Weiss (US 1968)**, 4K digital restoration

Introduction: UC Berkeley Professor of English Abdul R. JanMohamed

Interviews with three black Vietnam veterans capture their experiences of institutional and everyday racism. With Keith Garrett’s look at African Americans in the military, *The Black GI*.

Wednesday, March 29, 7pm

***Little Dieter Needs to Fly*, Werner Herzog (Germany/UK/France 1997)**, imported 35mm print

Herzog accompanies a Vietnam War POW back to the jungles of Laos to relive his imprisonment and torture in this award-winning documentary. With Jack Chambers’ 1967 short film *Hybrid*.

Sunday, April 29, 8:45pm

***Fog of War: Eleven Lessons from the Life of Robert S. McNamara*, Errol Morris (US 2003)**

In Person: Errol Morris

Built around interviews with former Secretary of Defense Robert S. McNamara, and featuring an immersive score by Philip Glass, Morris’ Academy Award–winning film is a haunting reflection on US military power from World War II through the Vietnam War.

BAMPFA film ticket prices, unless otherwise indicated: \$13 general admission; \$9 UC Berkeley faculty & staff, non-UC Berkeley students, disabled, 65+, 18 & under; \$8 BAMPFA members; \$5 UC Berkeley students; \$5 additional same-day feature. For full ticketing information visit <https://bampfa.org/visit/hours>