

Sunday, February 1, 2009, 7pm
Hertz Hall

Kronos Quartet

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

Laurence Neff, *Lighting Designer*
Scott Fraser, *Sound Designer*

PROGRAM

Aviya Kopelman (b. 1978) Widows & Lovers (2007) (*West Coast premiere*) *

- I. White Widow
- II. Lovers
- III. Black Widow

Kaija Saariaho (b. 1952) Nymphéa (1987) *

Hanna Kulenty (b. 1961) String Quartet No. 4 (A Cradle Song) (2007)
(*West Coast premiere*) *

INTERMISSION

Aleksandra Vrebalov (b. 1970) ...hold me, neighbor, in this storm... (2007) *

** Written for Kronos.*

Program is subject to change.

The Kronos Quartet records exclusively for Nonesuch Records.

Cal Performances' 2008–2009 season is sponsored by Wells Fargo.

Aviya Kopelman (b. 1978)
Widows & Lovers (2007)

Aviya Kopelman was selected as the recipient of the fourth commission offered through the Kronos: Under 30 Project. Begun in 2003, the Kronos: Under 30 Project is a commissioning and residency program for composers under 30 years of age, created to acknowledge the 30th anniversary of the founding of the Kronos Quartet. The program supports the creation of new work by young artists, and helps Kronos cultivate stronger connections with young composers in order to develop lasting artistic relationships with the next creative generation.

Ms. Kopelman was born in Moscow in 1978 and immigrated to Israel in 1987. She began taking piano lessons at her own initiative at the age of 12. She graduated from the Rubin Music Academy in Jerusalem, where she studied composition with Professor Tzvi Avni. In 2000, she was commissioned by composer Michael Wolpe to write a string quartet for the Sounds in the Desert Festival, and since then her works have been performed regularly in Israel and abroad by the Israel Chamber Orchestra, the Israel Camerata, Tel Aviv Chamber Choir, Conjunto Iberico Octet, Ensemble de la Paix, Les Solistes de Waterloo and the Jerusalem Trio, among others. Last year, she was commissioned to write an obligatory work for the 12th Arthur Rubinstein International Piano Master Competition. She has worked with and been influenced by such composers as Andre Hajdu, Oded Zehavi and Ronen Shapira. Ms. Kopelman teaches composition at the Hed College for Music in Tel Aviv and at the Rimon School of Jazz and Contemporary Music.

About *Widows & Lovers*, Ms. Kopelman writes:

Widows & Lovers consists of three parts: “White Widow,” a potent and rare species of marijuana; “Lovers”; and “Black Widow,” a species of spider whose female consumes the male directly after mating.

It was crucial for me to question the relevance of such a homogeneous ensemble as a string quartet in a time when electronic music has stretched the limits of orchestration and sound. I wanted to address

the sonic universe that surrounds me, exploring and using the numerous technical possibilities for live performance offered by Kronos Quartet, but without forsaking the strength of the strings as I perceive it: a warm, living, breathing and deeply expressive sound, which echoes in the heart over centuries.

The position of an amplified string quartet was another issue to be examined. Technically, nothing inhibits a string quartet from performing in a concert hall as well as in a club. This allows for different listening experience and a different audience. While writing this piece, I imagined it in both contexts.

Widows & Lovers developed out of a game of free associations, and moves between who I am and who I wish to be, between Kronos Quartet and myself, between classical chamber music and contemporary life.

Aviya Kopelman’s *Widows & Lovers* was commissioned for the Kronos Quartet as part of Kronos: Under 30 Project / #4 by the Carnegie Hall Corporation, Cal Performances and the Kronos Performing Arts Association. Additional support was provided by the National Endowment for the Arts, the William and Flora Hewlett Foundation, the San Francisco Foundation, Stephen K. Cassidy, and the Sally and Don Lucas Artists Programs at Montalvo Arts Center.

Loop programming by Roy Yarkoni and Ms. Kopelman.

Kaija Saariaho (b. 1952)
Nymphéa (1987)

Born in Finland, Kaija Saariaho lived a childhood embedded in music, playing several instruments. At the Sibelius Academy in Helsinki, she studied composition with Paavo Heininen, and later in Darmstadt and in Fribourg with Brian Ferneyhough and Klaus Huber. Her research of new timbres led to the study of new instrumental and computer techniques, which she worked on at IRCAM in Paris, starting in 1982.

Her major works include a violin concerto, *Graal théâtre*, written for Gidon Kremer; two works dedicated to Dawn Upshaw (*Château de l’âme*, which premiered at the Salzburg Festival, and *Lonh*, premiered at the Wien Modern Festival); *Ultra mar*, premiered by the New York Philharmonic; *Orion* for the Cleveland Orchestra; and *Quatre Instants*, written for Karita Mattila. Her first opera, *L’Amour de loin*, libretto by Amin Maalouf and staging by Peter Sellars, premiered at the Salzburg Festival and won the Grawemeyer Award. Her second opera, *Adriana Mater*, also on a libretto by Amin Maalouf and staged by Peter Sellars, appeared at Opéra Bastille. A vast oratorio, *La Passion de Simone*, was commissioned by the Wien Festival, the Los Angeles Philharmonic, and the Barbican and Lincoln centers. Among the many awards and prizes she has received are the Prix Italia, the Musical Award of the North Council, the Nemmers Composition Prize and *Musical America* Composer of the Year in 2008.

About *Nymphéa*, Risto Nieminen writes:

The string quartet, of all the musical genres the most closely bound to its 200-year history, is perhaps a surprising discovery in Kaija Saariaho’s list of published works. Then again, the ensemble of four string instruments does offer a host of different ways of producing sound, from noise to pure flageolet harmonics. At the same time, *Nymphéa* formed a natural supplement to the experiments with various string techniques found in *Lichtbogen* and *Io* from 1985–1987.

The basis of the harmonic world inhabited by *Nymphéa* lies in the rich spectra of the cellos sounds, which the composer has analyzed on the computer, using the structures that were revealed as a framework for the harmonies. This also helps to account for the subtitle *Jardin secret III*, which refers us to Kaija Saariaho’s computer software developed at IRCAM and applied in the two previous works in the series.

Naturally, Saariaho goes on to expand her harmonic world with electronic effects. Another semantic ingredient in the mix of sounds is the text to be heard at the close

of the work, a poem by Arseniy Tarkovsky (English translation by Kitty Hunter-Blair), the lines of which are delivered in a whisper by the players through the medium of microphones wired up to a sound sampler. Tarkovsky’s melancholic verse, which describes man’s desire to reach for the unknown, begins with the words:

*Now summer is gone
 And might never have been.
 In the sunshine it’s warm,
 But there has to be more.*

A second extra-musical echo is in the title of the work, which takes our thoughts to Claude Monet’s lily pads, although I suspect the composer herself was more conscious of the water lily as a physical object, when she writes:

“One or two ideas were going around in my mind as I was writing the piece: an image of the symmetrical structure of the lily, bending and taking new shape in the rocking motion of the waves. Interpretations of the same image in different dimensions; on the one hand a one-dimensional surface of colors and forms; on the other the different materials state, and dimensions to be sensed and experienced.”

Kaija Saariaho’s *Nymphéa* was commissioned for the Kronos Quartet by Lincoln Center for the Performing Arts.

Program note excerpted from the liner note of Kronos’s recording of Nymphéa on Ondine Records.

Hanna Kulenty (b. 1961)
String Quartet No. 4 (A Cradle Song) (2007)

Hanna Kulenty, born in Bialystok, Poland, studied composition with Włodzimierz Kotonski at the Chopin Music Academy (Warsaw) and with Louis Andriessen at the Royal Conservatory of Music (The Hague). She participated in several summer courses in Kazimierz and Darmstadt, where she studied with Iannis Xenakis, Witold Lutosławski, Thomas Kessler and François Bernard Mâche.

She has been composer-in-residence with Het Gelders Orkest (The Netherlands), lectured

at the Other Minds Festival (San Francisco) and at Soundstreams Canada 2005, and was guest professor at the Escola Superior de Música de Catalunya (Barcelona). She has served on juries for the Munich Biennale, International Gaudeamus Music Week, the International New Chamber Opera Competition Orpheus-Luciano Berio 2003–2004, and the International Competition of Contemporary Chamber Music (Cracow). Among her many awards is the first prize at UNESCO's 50th International Rostrum of Composers for her Trumpet Concerto (2002).

Ms. Kulenty has composed two operas, 12 works for orchestra and more than 60 other pieces. Her earlier music, consisting of many layers of simultaneous "arcs" that begin at different points of their emotional trajectories and proceed at different speeds, often calls for vast instrumental resources. The turn towards minimalism in later works may be attributed to studying with Andriessen; Ms. Kulenty calls this phase in her works "European trance music" and often structured her compositions as single, powerful arcs. Her preferred medium is the orchestra, though she has written numerous chamber works, and recently her penchant for musical drama and intensity of emotion found suitable expression in music for the stage. Since the success of her opera *The Mother of Black-Winged Dreams* at the Munich Biennale 1996, she has been considered one of the leading figures among Polish composers.

About String Quartet No. 4 (A Cradle Song), Ms. Kulenty writes:

The first time I wrote "A Cradle Song" was in the year my daughter Misia was born, in 1982, in a time I was studying composition. I wrote a simple melody for violin and soprano voice with a Polish text, and it was performed once at the Music Academy in Warsaw.

Ten years later Misia died. After a few months, I wrote a new "A Cradle Song," using only part of the original melody of the first composition. It was a version for violin, cello and piano and it was premiered at the Munich Biennale. It was a different cradle song...

Last year, when I started writing my fourth string quartet, again I couldn't avoid using this melody. In this instrumentation, timing and sound I wanted to give new energy and to see this song in a new light. To me, String Quartet No. 4 (A Cradle Song) again has a different meaning. A positive meaning.

Hanna Kulenty's String Quartet No. 4 (A Cradle Song) was commissioned for the Kronos Quartet by Mrs. Ralph I. Dorfman. Additional funds were provided by the Phyllis C. Wattis Foundation and the National Endowment for the Arts.

Aleksandra Vrebalov (b. 1970)
...hold me, neighbor, in this storm... (2007)

Aleksandra Vrebalov, a native of the former Yugoslavia, left Serbia in 1995 and continued her education in the United States. She holds a doctorate from the University of Michigan, where she studied with Evan Chambers and Michael Daugherty, and a master's degree from the San Francisco Conservatory, where her teacher was Elinor Armer. She has participated in numerous master classes and workshops, such as the New York University Summer Composition Workshop, Music Courses in Darmstadt (Germany), Szombathely (Hungary) and Kazimierz Dolny (Poland) in collaboration with IRCAM and the Cabrillo Festival in Santa Cruz, California. She now teaches at the City College of New York.

Ms. Vrebalov's works have been performed by the Kronos Quartet, the Cabrillo Festival Orchestra, Jorge Caballero, the Sausalito Quartet, Dusan Tynek Dance Company, Ijsbreker and the Moravian Philharmonic, among others. Her music has been recorded for Nonesuch and Vienna Modern Masters.

In 2005, *Lila* was premiered in Weill Recital Hall at Carnegie Hall by violinist Ana Milosavljevic. The premiere of the orchestral work *Orbits* opened the 30th Novi Sad Music Festivities and was broadcast live on national television, on the NS Channel. The same channel produced a

30-minute television biography of Ms. Vrebalov. That year, she also worked on the score for *Sleeping Beauty*, an experimental film introduced at New York City's Anthology Film Archives.

About *...hold me, neighbor, in this storm...*, Ms. Vrebalov writes:

The Balkans, with its multitude of cultural and religious identities, has had a troubled history of ethnic intolerance. For my generation of Tito's pioneers and children of Communists, growing up in the former Yugoslavia meant learning about and carrying in our minds the battles and numberless ethnic and religious conflicts dating back half a millennium, and honoring ancestors who died in them. By then, that distant history had merged with the nearer past, so those we remember from World War II are our grandparents. Their stories we heard firsthand. After several devastating ethnic wars in the 1990s, we entered a new century, this time each of us knowing in person someone who perished. As I write this in November 2007, on YouTube a new generation of Albanians and Serbs post their war songs bracing for another conflict, claiming their separate entitlements to the land and history, rather than a different kind of future, together.

Strangely, the cultural and religious differences that led to enmity in everyday life produced—after centuries of turbulently living together—most incredible fusions in music. It is almost as if what we weren't able to achieve through words and deeds—to fuse, and mix, and become something better and richer together—our music so famously accomplished instead.

...hold me, neighbor, in this storm... is inspired by folk and religious music from the region, whose insistent rhythms and harmonies create a sense of inevitability, a ritual trance with an obsessive, dark

energy. Peaceful passages of the work grew out of the delicately curved, elusive, often microtonal melodies of prayers, as well as escapist tavern songs from the region, as my grandmother remembers them.

For me, *...hold me, neighbor...* is a way to bring together the sounds of the church bells of Serbian orthodox monasteries and the Islamic calls for prayer. It is a way to connect histories and places by unifying one of the most civilized sounds of Western classical music—that of the string quartet—with ethnic Balkan instruments, the *gusle* [a bowed string instrument] and *tapan* [large, double-headed drum]. It is a way to piece together our identities fractured by centuries of intolerance, and to reach out and celebrate the land so rich in its diversity, the land that would be ashen, empty, shallow, if any one of us, all so different, weren't there.

Aleksandra Vrebalov's *...hold me, neighbor, in this storm...* was commissioned for the Kronos Quartet by Carnegie Hall and by the Clarice Smith Performing Arts Center at Maryland with funds from The Leading College and University Presenters Program of the Doris Duke Charitable Foundation. Additional support was provided by The James Irvine Foundation.

For the Kronos Quartet

Janet Cowperthwaite, *Managing Director*
Laird Rodet, *Associate Director*
Sidney Chen, *Artistic Administrator*
Scott Fraser, *Sound Designer*
Christina Johnson, *Communications Manager*
Calvin Ll. Jones, *Production Associate*
Nikolás McConnie-Saad, *Administrative Assistant*
Laurence Neff, *Production Director*
Lucinda Toy, *Business Operations Manager*
Julie Yip, *Administrative Assistant*
Anna M. Ranieri, *Chair, Board of Directors*



Joy Blakeberg

For more than 30 years, the **Kronos Quartet**—David Harrington, John Sherba (violins), Hank Dutt (viola) and Jeffrey Zeigler (cello)—has pursued a singular artistic vision, combining a spirit of fearless exploration with a commitment to expanding the range and context of the string quartet. In the process, Kronos has become one of the most celebrated and influential groups of our time, performing thousands of concerts worldwide, releasing more than 40 recordings of extraordinary breadth and creativity, collaborating with many of the world's most eclectic composers and performers, and commissioning hundreds of works and arrangements for string quartet. Kronos's work has also garnered numerous awards, including a Grammy Award for Best Chamber Music Performance (2004) and "Musicians of the Year" (2003) from *Musical America*.

Kronos's adventurous approach dates back to the ensemble's origins. In 1973, David Harrington was inspired to form Kronos after hearing George Crumb's *Black Angels*, a highly unorthodox, Vietnam War-inspired work featuring bowed water glasses, spoken-word passages and electronic effects. Kronos then began building a compellingly diverse repertoire for string quartet, performing and recording works by 20th-century masters (Bartók, Shostakovich, Webern), contemporary

composers (Aleksandra Vrebalov, John Adams, Alfred Schnittke), jazz legends (Ornette Coleman, Charles Mingus, Thelonious Monk) and artists from even farther afield (rock guitar legend Jimi Hendrix, Azeri vocalist Alim Qasimov, avant-garde saxophonist John Zorn).

Integral to Kronos's work is a series of long-running, in-depth collaborations with many of the world's foremost composers. One of the quartet's most frequent composer-collaborators is "Father of Minimalism" Terry Riley, whose work with Kronos includes the early *Sunrise of the Planetary Dream Collector*; *Cadenza on the Night Plain* and *Salome Dances for Peace*; 2002's *Sun Rings*, a multimedia, NASA-commissioned ode to the earth and its people, featuring celestial sounds and images from space; and, most recently, *The Cusp of Magic*, commissioned in honor of Riley's 70th birthday celebrations in 2005 and recorded and released in 2008. Kronos commissioned and recorded the three string quartets of Polish composer Henryk Mikolaj Górecki, with whom the group has been working for nearly 20 years. The quartet has also collaborated extensively with composers such as Philip Glass, recording his complete string quartets and scores to films like *Mishima* and *Dracula* (a restored edition of the Bela Lugosi classic); Azerbaijan's Franghiz Ali-Zadeh, whose works are

featured on the full-length 2005 release *Mugam Sayagi: Music of Franghiz Ali-Zadeh*; Steve Reich, whose Kronos-recorded *Different Trains* earned a Grammy; Argentina's Osvaldo Golijov, whose work with Kronos includes both compositions and extensive arrangements for albums like *Kronos Caravan* and *Nuevo*; and many more.

In addition to composers, Kronos counts numerous artists from around the world among its collaborators, including the Chinese *pipa* virtuoso Wu Man; legendary Bollywood "playback singer" Asha Bhosle, featured on Kronos's Grammy-nominated CD, *You've Stolen My Heart: Songs from R. D. Burman's Bollywood*; Inuit throat singer Tanya Tagaq; Mexican rockers Café Tacuba; genre defying sound artist and instrument builder Walter Kitundu; the Romanian gypsy band Taraf de Haïdouks; renowned American soprano Dawn Upshaw; and the unbridled British cabaret trio, the Tiger Lillies. Kronos has performed live with the likes of icons Allen Ginsberg, Zakir Hussain, the Modern Jazz Quartet, Tom Waits, David Barsamian, Howard Zinn, Betty Carter and David Bowie, and has appeared on recordings by such diverse talents as Nine Inch Nails, Amon Tobin, Dan Zanes, DJ Spooky, Dave Matthews, Nelly Furtado, Rokia Traoré, Joan Armatrading and Don Walsler.

Kronos's music has also featured prominently in other media, including film (*Requiem for a Dream*, *The Fountain*, *21 Grams*, *Heat*, *True Stories*) and dance, with noted choreographers such as Merce Cunningham, Paul Taylor, Twyla Tharp and Eiko & Koma setting pieces to Kronos's music.

The Quartet spends five months of each year on tour, appearing in concert halls, clubs, and festivals around the world including BAM Next Wave Festival, Carnegie Hall, the Barbican in London, WOMAD, UCLA's Royce Hall, Amsterdam's Concertgebouw, Shanghai Concert Hall and the Sydney Opera House. Kronos is equally prolific and wide-ranging on disc. The ensemble's expansive discography on Nonesuch Records includes collections like *Pieces of Africa* (1992), a showcase of African-born composers, which simultaneously topped *Billboard's* Classical and World Music lists; 2000's *Kronos Caravan*, whose musical "travels" span North and South America, Europe, and the Middle East; 1998's 10-disc anthology, *Kronos*

Quartet: 25 Years; Nuevo (2002), a Grammy- and Latin Grammy-nominated celebration of Mexican culture; and the 2003 Grammy-winner, Alban Berg's *Lyric Suite*.

Kronos's recording and performances reveal only a fraction of the group's commitment to new music. As a non-profit organization based in San Francisco, the Kronos Quartet/Kronos Performing Arts Association has commissioned more than 600 new works and arrangements for string quartet. Music publishers Boosey & Hawkes and Kronos have released sheet music for three signature works, all commissioned for Kronos, in the first volume of the *Kronos Collection*, a performing edition edited by Kronos. The quartet is committed to mentoring emerging professional performers, and in 2007 Kronos led its first Professional Training Workshop with four string quartets as part of the Weill Music Institute at Carnegie Hall. One of Kronos's most exciting initiatives is the Kronos: Under 30 Project, a unique commissioning and composer-in-residence program for composers under 30 years old, launched in conjunction with Kronos's own 30th birthday in 2003. By cultivating creative relationships with such emerging talents and a wealth of other artists from around the world, Kronos reaps the benefit of 30 years' wisdom while maintaining a fresh approach to music-making inspired by a new generation of composers and performers.

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Sightlines

Kronos Quartet

Sunday, February 1, 2009
Hertz Hall

Post-performance discussion with the artists. This *Sightlines* event is free to all event ticket holders.