

Sunday, April 6, 2014, 7pm
Hertz Hall

CAL PERFORMANCES 2013–2014 ARTIST IN RESIDENCE

Kronos Quartet

David Harrington, *violin*
John Sherba, *violin*
Hank Dutt, *viola*
Sunny Yang, *cello*

Brian H. Scott, *lighting supervisor*
Scott Fraser, *sound engineer*
Brian Mohr, *technical associate*

PROGRAM

Prelude to a Black Hole

Byzantine Chant Eternal Memory to the Virtuous[†]
(*arr.* Aleksandra Vrebalov)

Igor Stravinsky (1882–1971) Three Pieces for String Quartet (1914)
Dance
Eccentric
Canticle

Geeshie Wiley Last Kind Words[†]
(*arr.* Jacob Garchik)

Tanburi Cemil Bey (1873–1916) Eviç Taksim[†]
(*arr.* Stephen Prutsman)

Maurice Ravel (1875–1937) Trois beaux oiseaux du Paradis[†] (1914–1915)
(*arr.* JJ Hollingsworth)

Traditional Smyrneiko Minore[†]
(*arr.* Jacob Garchik)

Anton Webern (1883–1945) Six Bagatelles, Op. 9 (1911–1913)

Mäßig
Leicht bewegt
Ziemlich fließend
Sehr langsam
Äußerst langsam
Fließend

Charles Ives (1874–1954) They Are There! Fighting for the People's
New Free World (1917)

Serge Rachmaninoff (1873–1943) Nunc Dimittis, from *All-Night Vigil*[†] (1915)
(arr. Kronos)

Beyond Zero: 1914–1918*

A new work for quartet with film
World première

Aleksandra Vrebalov (b. 1970), *composer*
Bill Morrison (b. 1965), *filmmaker*

David Harrington and Drew Cameron, *creative consultants*

Janet Cowperthwaite, *producer*
Kronos Performing Arts Association, *production management*

Played without pause

* Written for Kronos

† Arranged for Kronos

Beyond Zero: 1914–1918, with music by Aleksandra Vrebalov and film by Bill Morrison, is supported, in part, by an award to the Kronos Performing Arts Association from the National Endowment for the Arts. Art Works. Additional funding for the project is provided by The MAP Fund, supported by the Doris Duke Charitable Foundation and the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation.

Beyond Zero: 1914–1918 was commissioned for the Kronos Quartet by Cal Performances; the National World War I Museum at Liberty Memorial, and Harriman-Jewell Series, Kansas City, Missouri; and the Hopkins Center, Dartmouth College.

Kronos' San Francisco Home Season is supported, in part, by The Bernard Osher Foundation.

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Cal Performances' 2013–2014 season is sponsored by Wells Fargo.

PRELUDE TO A BLACK HOLE

THE GREAT WAR, a monumental blunder of a handful of monarchs and ministers...

"When we're through this cursed war / All started by a sneaking gouger / making slaves of men" [Charles Ives]

contains, and sometimes conceals, the stories of millions. The bombast of newspapers, the war-mongers' whoop all too often drowned out private meditations, acts of remembrance, and moments of innocent joy.

"In these great times, which I knew when they were small, and which shall be small again should they live long enough" [Karl Kraus]

Kronos Quartet's "Prelude to a Black Hole" weaves together these quiet voices...

"who would Kronos have been working with in 1914?" [David Harrington]

with a collage (sometimes a barrage) of 78 rpm records, piano rolls and antique musical instruments culled from around the world.

"Most wars are made by small stupid / selfish bossing groups / while the people have no say."
[Charles Ives]

The monumental blunder began in Sarajevo, when one man shot another. Ninety-nine years later, near the historical seat of Serb Orthodoxy, Aleksandra Vrebalov discussed the century's wars with Father Jerotej of the Kovilj Monastery. He sang:

"In everlasting remembrance shall the righteous be, he shall not be afraid of evil tidings,"

...a Byzantine verse performed regularly at the feasts of martyrs, always sung right at the point of communion with the divine.

Others, too, gazed towards the heavens. Rachmaninoff's *All-Night Vigil*, a choral orchestration of Kievan and Russian *znamenny* chant, were written quickly and with conviction during the first two months of 1915. "*Nyne otpushchayeshi*"—in Latin, "*Nunc dimittis*"—depicts the enraptured Symeon, who had sworn not to die until he had beheld the Messiah.

"Lord, now you let your servant go in peace / Your word has been fulfilled / My eyes have seen the salvation / You have prepared in the sight of every people...."

As Symeon the God-Receiver utters his last,

"A light to reveal you to the nations and the glory of your people, Israel,"

the serenely radiant harmony gradually darkens, until it is finally entombed in sepulchral B-flats for the basses.

"Danilin shook his head, saying, 'Now where on earth are we to find such basses?' ...Nevertheless, he did find them. I knew the voices of my countrymen..." [Serge Rachmaninoff]

This descent into death was also to be Rachmaninoff's own: the composer so loved this work he chose it for his funeral.

The last of Stravinsky's *Three Pieces for String Quartet*, with its call-and-response pattern, echoes the Litanies of the Russian Orthodox church. The deacon makes petition of God:

"In peace let us pray to the Lord, for the peace that is from above, and for the salvation of our souls, let us pray unto the lord." [The Great Litany]

To which the congregation's reply is almost always the same:

"Господи, помилуй—Gospodi pomiluj—Lord, have mercy."

At the end, the viola issues a heartfelt

"Amen."

If Stravinsky's third piece addresses the soul, the other two attend to the body. The first movement offers a cubist perspective on a Russian peasant dance. The cello digs into a seven-beat ostinato, while the first violinist capers to a dizzying, circular melody of 23 beats. From an identical point of departure, each instrument proceeds on its merry way. The second piece, according to Stravinsky, was a portrait of

"Little Tich, a harlequin no more than four feet in his shoes, but as full of humor as a fraternal order funeral," [H. L. Mencken, et al.]

though Ernest Ansermet was certain that Stravinsky's clown must be a sad one.

Some were less sad to see the war come.

"I can hardly wait any longer to be called up.... It is the struggle of the angels with devils."
[Anton Webern]

Yet Webern's music contains none of this chest-beating. It demands that the listener respect the smallest, quietest utterance of the individual, that the listener respect music which

"expresses a novel with a single gesture, a joy in a single breath." [Arnold Schoenberg]

The intensely spiritual composer sought to portray earthly transcendence. The lugubrious fifth bagatelle recollects the death of Webern's mother, while the sixth captures

"The angels in heaven. The incomprehensible state after death." [Anton Webern]

Ravel, too, vacillated between the roles of poet and warrior. The *Oiseaux du Paradis* are figures from Persian myth, rare birds who appear to heroes as auspicious omens. The gentle, modal harmonies and frequent melodic repetitions call to mind the courtly medieval rondeau. The three birds themselves, emissaries from a friend who has gone off to war, are

"more blue than the sky...as white as snow...bright, bright red."

Displaying these patriotic colors, they bestow upon the poet (in this case, Ravel himself)

"a blue-eyed glance...the purest kiss...a crimson heart"

instilling in him both fear and a desire for reunion. The work was dedicated to Paul Painlevé, mathematician, minister and aeronautic engineer. The composer yearned to fly for France and, against the advice of horrified friends and colleagues, used his connection with Painlevé in an attempt to enroll in the country's air corps.

"What you do to me baby it never gets outta me / I may not see you after I cross the deep blue sea."

Three 78s, made years after the war in Grafton, Wisconsin, are virtually all that is left of blues guitarist and singer Geeshie Wiley. The "Last Kind Words" may or may not have been those her father said before going off to fight.

"If I die, if I die in the German war, I want you to send my body, send it to my mother, lord."

We can search for knowledge, winding our way through the spiral labyrinth of this record—its distinctive guitarwork, its atmosphere of foreboding (expressed in the minor mode, peculiar for the period), Wiley's deadpan singing—but there will always be a hole at the center, a perpetual reminder of absence.

"The Mississippi River, you know it's deep and wide, I can stand right here, see my babe from the other side."

The Greek men of New York, economic migrants or refugees from Ottoman depredations, knew this longing as well. When Marika Papagika sang to them

"If you love me and it's a dream, may I never wake up,"

the lonely could forget abandoned homes and absent lovers. Born on the eastern Greek isle of Kos, Papagika performed (it is thought) throughout the Levant before settling in America. She brought with her the *smyrneiko*, the popular, polyglot cabaret style that originated in the cafés of cosmopolitan Smyrna.

"In the sweetness of dawn, God should take my soul away."

War did not end in 1919, the year Papagika made her recording. Greek forces wrested Smyrna from the collapsing Ottoman Empire. Kemal Atatürk retook the city in 1922. Three days later, the Great Fire reduced much of Smyrna to ash.

"The Eviç makam still spoke through his thoughts with the ambience it had gathered from now-lost lands of the Balkans, serving up beautiful facets of Nuran's attributes, of the bitterness of human fate, and of the memories of long-forgotten cities..." [Ahmet Hamdi Tanpınar]

Eviç is one of the modes of classical Turkish music, classified centuries before the Ottomans by the great philosopher al-Farabi of Baghdad and Damascus. According to one music dictionary, other modes one might evoke within Eviç are Müsteâr, Hicâz, Nikrîz or Segâh.

“Written on all the rakı bottles were an array of honorary dedications: ‘To my master, my esteemed master, the venerated Cemil...’” [Ahmet Hamdi Tanpınar]

Tanburi Cemil Bey, the virtuoso of many instruments, was revered for the intricacy of his melodies, the fluidity of his modulations, the complexity of his preludes, his *taksim*. All were performed with an unruffled smile. Many of his compositions survive, but the era’s notation was insufficient to cope with his improvisations. Were it not for the dozens of records made by the German-Jewish brothers Hermann and Julius Blumenthal, much of Cemil’s most personal, most spontaneous art would have died with him.

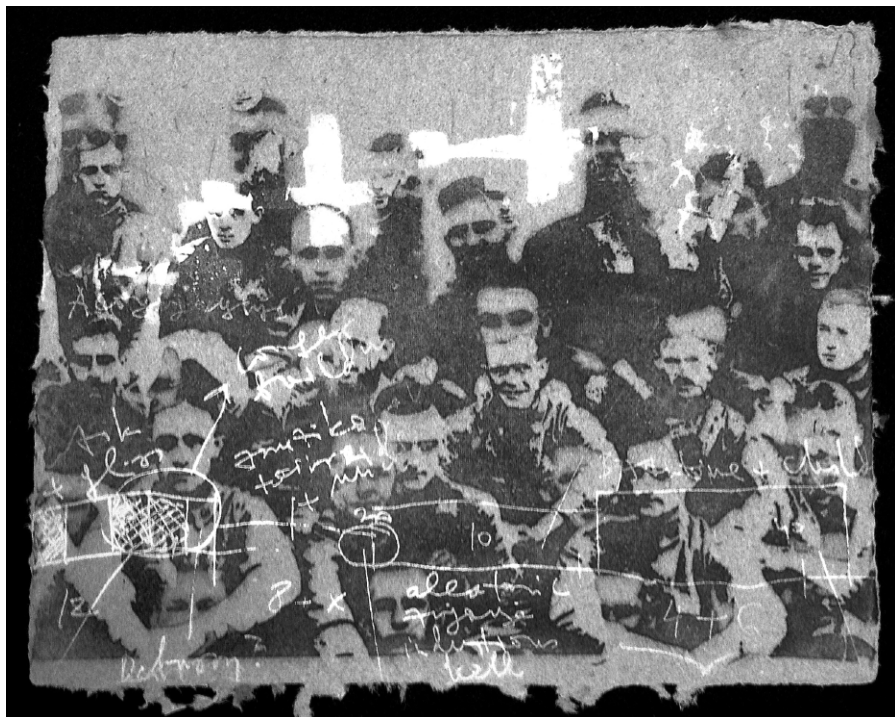
“If I get killed, if I get killed, please don’t bury my soul / I p’fer just leave me out, let the buzzards eat me whole.” [Geeshie Wiley]

“Hip hip hooray you’ll hear them say / as they go to the fighting front.” [Charles Ives]

“For this is now a war for peace.” [H. G. Wells]

Greg Dubinsky

BEYOND ZERO: 1914–1918



Drew Cameron

UNLIKE OFFICIAL HISTORIES that have often romanticized and glorified the war, artists have typically been the keepers of sanity, showing the war in its brutality, destruction, and ugliness. For many, across history, creating art in those circumstances served as a survival mechanism.

While working on *Beyond Zero: 1914–1918*, I was inspired by antiwar writings, music, and art created during and immediately after World War I, including, for example, the writings of Wilfred Owen and Siegfried Sassoon, the music of Satie and Debussy, and the Dada movement.

Throughout the piece, there are several documentary recordings from different wars—from the horrific “Loyalty Speech” of James Watson Gerard, who served as the U.S. Ambassador to Germany until 1917, to mili-

tary commands of Serbian and Bosnian troops during the conflicts that led to the brutal falling apart of Yugoslavia in 1990s, to the chilling sound of air-raid sirens during the bombing of London in World War II.

My intention was to juxtapose these accounts with the finest expressions of spirit and creativity occurring at the same time, such as Béla Bartók’s own playing of his *Piano Suite* written in 1916, and Huelsenbeck’s reading of his *Chorus Sanctus*, also written in 1916. *Beyond Zero: 1914–1918* ends with fragments of a dark Byzantine hymn “Eternal Memory to the Virtuous,” chanted by the monks from the Kovilj monastery in Serbia, as a remembrance to all who lost their lives in the Great War and every single war since then.

Aleksandra Vrebalov

THE FILM PORTION of *Beyond Zero: 1914–1918* comprises films that have never been seen by modern audiences. I searched archives for rare 35mm nitrate films shot during the Great War, and made brand new HD scans from the originals. In many cases, this is the last expression of these films—some original copies were determined to not be worth preserving beyond this transfer to digital media.

What we are left with is a glimpse of a war fought in fields, in trenches, and on the ground. Most of the footage shows some emulsion deterioration—the by-product of a history stored on an unstable base for 100 years. Through a veil of physical degradation, we see training exercises, and parades. Much of the battle footage was in fact re-enacted for the camera, as early motion picture cinematography did not lend itself to spontaneous or itinerant productions in war zones.

We see a record of a war as a series of documents passed along to us like a message in a bottle. None is more powerful than the record of the film itself, made visible by its own deterioration. We are constantly reminded of its materiality: this film was out on these same fields with these soldiers 100 years ago, a collaborator, and a survivor.

If these are images that we, as viewers, were once intended to see, to convince us of the necessity and valor of war, they now read as images that have fought to remain on the screen. They are threatened on all sides by the unstable nitrate base they were recorded on, and the prism of nearly 100 uninterrupted years of war, through which we now view them.

Bill Morrison



Drew Cameron

Pulp Prints on Combat Paper, by Drew Cameron. The size of the actual prints is 11"x14" on Combat Paper.

The process I used in creating these works was to gather source material from Bill Morrison (stills he selected from some of the archival footage), handwritten notes from Aleksandra Vrebalov from her creation of the composition, and portraits of World War I soldiers about to ship off to war from the MacArthur Museum of Arkansas Military History.

Using these in a digital photograph form, I rendered them into high-contrast images that I could use to create positives for silkscreen stencils. I burned the silkscreen stencils and then printed the images with a highly beaten, pigmented spray pulp onto a freshly formed sheet of Combat Paper. Essentially, I print with paper pulp onto wet paper. When they dry, the printed image and sheet of paper become one! I would call them Pulp Prints on Combat Paper. The uniforms I used were from recently returned veterans who have participated in my workshops; the fiber represents all branches of military service.

Drew Cameron, Combat Paper Project



FOR 40 YEARS, the Kronos Quartet—David Harrington (*violin*), John Sherba (*violin*), Hank Dutt (*viola*), and Sunny Yang (*cello*)—has pursued a singular artistic vision, combining a spirit of fearless exploration with a commitment to continually re-imagining the string quartet experience. 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 50 recordings of extraordinary breadth and creativity, collaborating with many of the world's most intriguing and accomplished composers and performers, and commissioning more than 800 works and arrangements for string quartet. In 2011, Kronos became the only recipients of both the Polar Music Prize and the Avery Fisher Prize, two of the most prestigious awards given to musicians. The group's numerous awards also include a Grammy Award for Best Chamber Music Performance (2004) and "Musicians of the Year" (2003) from *Musical America*.

Kronos' 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, Webern, Schnittke), contemporary composers (John Adams, Osvaldo Golijov, Aleksandra Vrebalov), jazz legends (Ornette Coleman, Charles Mingus, Thelonious Monk), rock artists (guitar legend Jimi Hendrix, Brazilian electronica artist Amon Tobin, and Icelandic indie-rock group Sigur Rós), and artists who truly defy genre (performance artist Laurie Anderson, composer-sound sculptor-inventor Trimpin, interdisciplinary composer-performer Meredith Monk).

Integral to Kronos' 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 *Salome Dances for Peace* (1985–1986); *Sun Rings* (2002), a multimedia, NASA-commissioned ode to the earth and its people, featuring celestial sounds and images from space; and *Another Secret eQuation*, for youth chorus and string quartet, premiered at an April 2011 concert celebrating Riley's 75th birthday. Kronos commissioned and recorded the three string quartets of Polish composer Henryk Górecki, with whom the group worked for more than 25 years. The Quartet has also collaborated extensively with such composers as Philip Glass, recording a CD of his string quartets in 1995 and premiering a new work in 2013, among other projects; Azerbaijan's Franghiz

Ali-Zadeh, whose works are featured on the full-length 2005 release *Mugam Sayagi*; Steve Reich, from Kronos' performance of the Grammy-winning composition *Different Trains* (1989) to the September 11th-themed *WTC 9/11* (2011); and many more.

In addition to composers, Kronos counts numerous performers from around the world among its collaborators, including the Chinese *pipa* virtuoso Wu Man; Azeri master vocalist Alim Qasimov, legendary Bollywood "playback singer" Asha Bhosle, featured on Kronos' Grammy-nominated CD *You've Stolen My Heart: Songs from R. D. Burman's Bollywood*; Inuit throat singer Tanya Tagaq; indie rock band The National; Mexican rockers Café Tacvba; sound artist and instrument builder Walter Kitundu; and the Romanian gypsy band Taraf de Haïdouks. Kronos has performed live with the likes of Paul McCartney, Allen Ginsberg, Zakir Hussain, Modern Jazz Quartet, Noam Chomsky, Rokia Traoré, Tom Waits, David Barsamian, Howard Zinn, Betty Carter, and David Bowie, and has appeared on recordings by such diverse talents as Nine Inch Nails, Dan Zanes, DJ Spooky, Dave Matthews, Nelly Furtado, Joan Armatrading, and Don Walser. In dance, the famed choreographers Merce Cunningham, Paul Taylor, Twyla Tharp, and Eiko & Koma have created pieces with Kronos' music.

Kronos' work has also featured prominently in a number of films, including two recent Academy Award-nominated documentaries: the AIDS-themed *How to Survive a Plague* (2012) and *Dirty Wars* (2013), an exposé of covert warfare for which Kronos' David Harrington served as Music Supervisor. Kronos also performed scores by Philip Glass for the films *Mishima* and *Dracula* (a restored edition of the 1931 Tod Browning-Bela Lugosi classic) and by Clint Mansell for the Darren Aronofsky films *The Fountain* and *Requiem for a Dream*. Other films featuring Kronos' music include *21 Grams*, *Heat*, and *True Stories*.

The Quartet spends five months of each year on tour, appearing in concert halls, clubs, and festivals around the world, including Lincoln Center Out of Doors, 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 recordings. 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; 1998's ten-disc anthology, *Kronos Quartet: 25 Years*; *Nuevo* (2002), a Grammy- and Latin Grammy-nominated celebration of Mexican culture; and the 2004 Grammy winner, Alban Berg's *Lyric Suite*. Among the group's latest releases are *Rainbow* (Smithsonian Folkways, 2010), in collaboration with musicians from Afghanistan and Azerbaijan; *Music of Vladimir Martynov* (Nonesuch, 2011), and *Aheym: Kronos Quartet Plays Music by Bryce Dessner* (Anti-, 2013). Music publishers Boosey & Hawkes and Kronos released sheet music for three signature Kronos-commissioned works in *Kronos Collection, Volume 1* (2006), a performing edition edited by Kronos; *Volume 2* will be released in 2014.

In addition to its role as a performing and recording ensemble, the quartet is committed to mentoring emerging performers and composers and has led workshops, master classes, and other education programs via the San Francisco Conservatory of Music, the California State Summer School for the Arts, Carnegie Hall's Weill Institute, the Barbican in London, and other institutions in the United States and overseas. Kronos is undertaking extended educational residencies in 2013–2014 at Cal Performances, the Clarice Smith Performing Arts Center at the University of Maryland, the Special Music School at the Kaufman Music Center in New York City, and the Malta Arts Festival.

With a staff of ten based in San Francisco, the nonprofit Kronos Performing Arts Association (KPAA) manages all aspects of Kronos' work, including the commissioning of new works, concert tours, concert presentations in the San Francisco Bay Area, education programs, and more.

One of KPAA's most exciting initiatives is the *Kronos: Under 30 Project*, a unique commissioning and residency program for composers

under age 30 that has now added five new works to the Kronos repertoire. By cultivating creative relationships with emerging and established artists from around the world, Kronos and KPAA reap the benefit of decades of wisdom while maintaining a fresh approach to music-making.

Aleksandra Vrebalov, a native of the former Yugoslavia, left Serbia in 1995 and continued her education in the United States. She holds a B.A. in composition from Novi Sad University in Serbia, a M.M. from San Francisco Conservatory of Music, and doctorate in composition from the University of Michigan. She lives in New York City.

Ms. Vrebalov, named 2011 Composer of the Year by *Muzika Klasika* (for her opera *Mileva*, commissioned by the Serbian National Theater for its 150th anniversary season), has received awards from the American Academy of Arts and Letters, Vienna Modern Masters, ASCAP, Meet the Composer, and the Douglas Moore Foundation, as well as two Mokranjac Awards, given by Serbian Association of Composers for best work premiered in the country in 2010 and 2012.

Ms. Vrebalov has had her works performed by Kronos, David Krakauer, ETHEL, Jorge Caballero, Serbian National Theater, and Belgrade Philharmonic, among others. She has been commissioned by Carnegie Hall, Brooklyn Youth Chorus, Barlow Endowment, Clarice Smith Performing Arts Center, Merkin Hall, San Francisco Conservatory, Louth Contemporary Music Society (Ireland). Her works have been choreographed by Dušan Tynek Dance Theatre (New York City), Rambert Dance Company (United Kingdom), Take Dance (New York City), and Providence Festival Ballet. Her music has been used in two films dealing with atrocities of war: *Soul Murmur*, directed by Helen Doyle (Canada), and *Slučaj Kepiro* by Natasa Krstic (Serbia).

Ms. Vrebalov's string quartet *...hold me, neighbor, in this storm...* was written for and recorded by Kronos for the album *Floodplain*. Her string quartet *Pannonia Boundless*, also for

Kronos, was published by Boosey & Hawkes as part of the Kronos Collection, and recorded for the album *Kronos Caravan*. To learn more, please visit aleksandravrebalov.com.

Bill Morrison's films often combine archival film material set to contemporary music. He has collaborated with some of the most influential composers of our time, including John Adams, Laurie Anderson, Gavin Bryars, Dave Douglas, Richard Einhorn, Philip Glass, Michael Gordon, Henryk Górecki, Bill Frisell, Vijay Iyer, Jóhann Jóhannsson, David Lang, Julia Wolfe, and Steve Reich, among many others.

Decasia (67 minutes, 2002), a collaboration with the composer Michael Gordon, was selected to the United States Library of Congress's 2013 National Film Registry, becoming the most modern film named to the list that preserves works of "great cultural, historic or aesthetic significance to the nation's cinematic heritage." Mr. Morrison's films are also in the collection of the Museum of Modern Art, the Walker Art Center, and the EYE Film Institute. He is a Guggenheim Fellow and has received the Alpert Award for the Arts, an NEA Creativity Grant, Creative Capital, and a fellowship from the Foundation for Contemporary Arts. His theatrical projection design has been recognized with two Bessie awards and an Obie Award.

In 2013, Mr. Morrison was honored with retrospective programs in four different countries: the Walker Art Museum, Minneapolis; the Vila do Conde Short Film Festival, Portugal; the Adelaide Film Festival, Australia; and the Aarhus Film Festival, Denmark.

In 2014, *The Great Flood* will open theatrically and *The Miners Hymns* will tour with live musical performances in the United States and United Kingdom. Mr. Morrison will have a mid-career retrospective at the Museum of Modern Art, New York, in October and November 2014.

Mr. Morrison's work is distributed by Icarus Films in North America, and the BFI in the United Kingdom.

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The Kronos Quartet records for Nonesuch Records.