

music dance theater
Cal Performances
UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA, BERKELEY



Tehmineh Monzavi

Jay Blakesberg

Kronos Quartet
with special guest **Mahsa Vahdat**

Thursday, December 2, 2021, 7:30pm
Zellerbach Hall

Kronos Quartet

with special guest Mahsa Vahdat, *vocals*

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

Brian H. Scott, *lighting designer*
Brian Mohr, *sound designer*

PROGRAM

Peni CANDRA RINI (arr. Jacob Garchik) *Maduswara***

Angélique KIDJO (arr. Garchik) *YanYanKliYan Senamido #1***
(World Premiere)

Terry RILEY *This Assortment of Atoms – One Time Only!*
III. This Assortment of Atoms – One Time Only! **

Missy MAZZOLI *Enthusiasm Strategies***

KIDJO (arr. Garchik) *YanYanKliYan Senamido #2***
(World Premiere)

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Kronos Quartet & Mahsa Vahdat

Mahsa VAHDAT (arr. Sahba Aminikia) *The Sun Rises[†]*
The Sun Rises
Vanishing Lines
My Ruthless Companion

VAHDAT (arr. Atabak Elyasi) *Vaya, Vaya**

VAHDAT (arr. Aminikia) *Placeless[†]*

VAHDAT (arr. Elyasi) *I Was Dead[†]*

* Written for Kronos

** Written for *Fifty for the Future: The Kronos Learning Repertoire*

[†] Arranged for Kronos

*Tonight's program will be performed without intermission.
The program will last approximately 80 minutes.*



Peni Candra Rini (b. 1983)
Maduswara (2020)

Arranged by Jacob Garchik (b. 1976)

Peni Candra Rini is the daughter of a master puppeteer from East Java, Indonesia, and one of few female contemporary composers, songwriters, poets, and vocalists who performs *sinden*, a soloist-female style of gamelan singing. Strongly committed to preserving and sharing the musical traditions of her country, Candra Rini has created many musical compositions for vocals, gamelan, and *karawitan*, and has collaborated with various artists worldwide, including Katsura Kan, Noriko Omura, Aki Bando, Kiyoko Yamamoto (JP), Found Sound Nation New York, Elena Moon Park (USA), Ali Tekbas (Turkey), Mehdi Nassouli (Morocco), Asma Ghanem (Palestine), and Rodrigo Parejo (Spain), among many others.

Candra Rini has collaborated with various gamelan groups from all over the world, and has performed at major festivals including Mascot SIPA Solo International Performing Arts 2016, TEDx Ubud 2019, Big Ears Festival 2019, Mapping Melbourne 2018 Multicultural Art Festival, International Gamelan Festival 2018 Surakarta, Indonesian Tong-Festival Festival 2018 in The Hague, Holland Festival 2017, WOMADelaide festival 2014 in Adelaide, Spoleto Dei Duo Mondri Festival 2013, and Lincoln Center White Light Festival 2011. Her recorded albums include *Ayom* (2019), *Timur* (2018), *Agni* (2017), *Mahabharata – Kurusetra War* (2016), *Daughter of the Ocean* (2016), *Bhumi* (2015), *Sekar* (2012), and *Bramara* (2010).

In 2012, Candra Rini completed an artist residency at the California Art Institute with funding from the Asian Cultural Council. During that time, she appeared as a guest artist at eight American universities and participated in master classes with vocal master Meredith Monk. In addition to this extensive work as a performer, Candra Rini is also a lecturer in the Karawitan Department and a doctoral candidate in musical arts at the Indonesian Art Institute (ISI) in Surakarta.

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About *Maduswara*, Peni Candra Rini writes:

“Javanese society’s consideration of what is in vogue has changed, and the decline of appreciation in the traditional arts has had a major impact on the existence of the female Javanese singer (*sindhen*); this has impacted both the singers and the audience. Today’s listeners of *karawitan* have become accustomed to the phenomena of *nggantung rebab*, which is found on the coasts of island Java, far from the palaces (*keraton*). The phenomena of *nggantung rebab* is when people expect *karawitan* concerts to offer musical pieces (*gending*) with hard rhythms, songs that follow a fast tempo like those found in discotheques, where visitors get drunk. The *rebab* is a subtle and old-fashioned instrument and is beginning to be eliminated, reflecting the move away from more delicate presentations. The impact is seen in a generation gap, where younger singers feel they do not need to study the classical vocabulary because it is rarely used.

“This discourse continues in contemporary *karawitan*, as found in *campursari* music, which performs the melodies of *karawitan* using MIDI instruments and electric keyboards. This is because those instruments are very practical, easy to carry, and cheaper than a gamelan set. *Campursari* dominated the scene in the 1990s and 2000s, pioneered by the late Manthous through CSGK (Campur Sari Gunung Kidul), and numerous commercial recordings were made and sold during that time. But many believe that *campursari* fails to represent the classical gamelan repertoire. Out of *campursari* came a generation of *pesinden* who were considered to have below average singing ability because the sound they produced was discordant in tone and not in accordance with the rules of Javanese gamelan. Because of this, *sindhen* singing *campursari* are not taken seriously in art schools, a serious problem considering diversity is already lacking in those schools.

“The emergence of social media has given *pesindhen* access to self-promotion, which the singers now readily employ. But what appears on social media often does not represent real life, and is not a true achievement or representation of the singers’ abilities. *Sindhen* now have the added pressure of living within a celebrity

culture, adored for their beauty and ability to dance on stage, with flawless make-up and frenzied lights; their duties as singers and orators of poetry take second fiddle.

“*Maduswara* was arranged to encourage this generation of *pesindhen* in order to realize their duty as conveyors of the universal values of life; because, whether they are aware or not, these artists shape the spirit of the nation.”

Angélique Kidjo (b. 1960)
***YanYanKliYan Senamido* (World Premiere)**
 Arranged by Jacob Garchik

As a performer, Angélique Kidjo’s striking voice, stage presence, and fluency in multiple cultures and languages have won respect from her peers and expanded her following across national borders. Cal Performances’ 2021–22 artist-in-residence, she has cross-pollinated the West African traditions of her childhood in Benin with elements of American R&B, funk, and jazz, as well as influences from Europe and Latin America.

After exploring the roads of Africa’s diaspora—through Brazil, Cuba, and the United States—and offering a refreshing and electrifying take on the Talking Heads album *Remain In Light* (called “transformative” by the *New York Times*, “visionary” by NPR Music, “stunning” by *Rolling Stone*, and “one of the year’s most vibrant albums” by the *Washington Post*), the French-Beninese singer is now reflecting on an icon of the Americas, celebrated salsa singer Celia Cruz. Kidjo’s album *Celia* (Verve/Universal Music France) divests itself of glamor to investigate the African roots of the Cuban-born woman who became the “Queen” of salsa.

Kidjo’s star-studded album *DJIN DJIN* won a Grammy Award for Best Contemporary World Album in 2008, and her album *OYO* was nominated for the same award in 2011. In 2014, Kidjo’s first book, a memoir titled *Spirit Rising: My Life, My Music* (Harper Collins) and her twelfth album, *EVE* (Savoy/429 Records), were released to critical acclaim. *EVE* later went on to win the Grammy Award for Best World Music Album in 2015, and her historic, orchestral album *Sings* with the Orchestre Philharmonique du Luxembourg (Savoy/429 Records) won a Grammy for Best World Music Album

in 2016. Kidjo has gone on to perform this genre-bending work with a list of international symphony orchestras that includes the Bruckner Orchestra, the Royal Scottish National Orchestra, and the Philharmonie de Paris. Her collaboration with Philip Glass, *IFÉ: Three Yorùbá Songs*, made its US debut to a sold-out concert with the San Francisco Symphony in June 2015. In 2019, Kidjo helped Philip Glass premiere his Symphony No. 12, *Lodger*, a symphonic re-imagining of the David Bowie album of the same name, at a sold-out performance with the Los Angeles Philharmonic. In addition to performing this orchestral concert, Kidjo continues to tour globally, performing the high-energy concert she’s become famous for with her four-piece band.

Kidjo also travels the world advocating on behalf of children in her capacity as a UNICEF and OXFAM Goodwill Ambassador. At the G7 Summit in 2019, President Macron of France named her as the spokesperson for the AFAWA initiative (Affirmative Finance Action for Women in Africa) to help close the financing gap for women entrepreneurs on that continent. She has also created her own charitable foundation, Batonga, dedicated to supporting the education of young girls in Africa.

More information about Kidjo’s *YanYanKliYan Senamido* will be available soon at 50ft.kronosquartet.org.

Terry Riley (b. 1935)
This Assortment of Atoms – One Time Only!
 (2020)

III. This Assortment of Atoms – One Time Only!

Terry Riley first came to prominence in 1964 when he subverted the world of tightly organized atonal composition then in fashion. With the groundbreaking *In C*—a work built upon steady pulse throughout; short, simple repeated melodic motives; and static harmonies—Riley achieved an elegant and non-nostalgic return to tonality. In demonstrating the hypnotic allure of complex musical patterns made of basic means, he produced the seminal work of Minimalism.

Riley’s facility for complex pattern-making is the product of his virtuosity as a keyboard



improviser. He quit formal composition following *In C* in order to concentrate on improvisation, and in the late 1960s and early '70s he became known for weaving dazzlingly intricate skeins of music from improvisations on organ and synthesizer. At this time, Riley also devoted himself to studying North Indian vocal techniques under the legendary Pandit Pran Nath, and a new element entered his music: long-limbed melody. From his work in Indian music, moreover, he became interested in the subtle distinctions of tuning that would be hard to achieve with a traditional classical ensemble.

Riley began notating music again in 1979 when both he and the Kronos Quartet were on the faculty at Mills College in Oakland. By collaborating with Kronos, he discovered that his various musical passions could be integrated, not as pastiche, but as different sides of similar musical impulses that still maintained something of the oral performing traditions of India and jazz. Riley's first quartets were inspired by his keyboard improvisations, but his knowledge of string quartets became more sophisticated through his work with Kronos, combining rigorous compositional ideas with a more performance-oriented approach.

This three-decade-long relationship has yielded 27 works for string quartet, including a concerto for string quartet, *The Sands*, which was the Salzburg Festival's first-ever new music commission; *Sun Rings*, a multimedia piece for choir, visuals, and space sounds, commissioned by NASA; and *The Cusp of Magic*, for string quartet and *pipa*. Kronos' album *Cadenza on the Night Plain*, a collection of music by Riley, was selected by both *Time* and *Newsweek* as one of the 10 Best Classical Albums of the Year in 1988. The epic five-quartet cycle *Salome Dances for Peace* was selected as the #1 Classical Album of the Year by *USA Today* and was nominated for a Grammy in 1989.

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About *This Assortment of Atoms – One Time Only!*, Terry Riley writes:

"This Assortment of Atoms – One Time Only! is the first work that I set out to compose since relocating to Japan in February 2019. It is in three movements: 'Lunch in Chinatown,' 'A

Gentle Rain,' and 'This Assortment of Atoms – One Time Only!' The third movement that you hear tonight consists of a series of repeating phrases that give the performers the choice to shape the flow of the performance."

Missy Mazzoli (b. 1980)

Enthusiasm Strategies (2019)

Recently deemed "one of the more consistently inventive, surprising composers now working in New York" (*New York Times*) and "Brooklyn's post-millennial Mozart" (*Time Out New York*), Missy Mazzoli has had her music performed globally by the Kronos Quartet, eighth blackbird, violinist Jennifer Koh, LA Opera, New York City Opera, the Minnesota Orchestra, Cincinnati Opera, and many others. From 2012–15, she was the composer-in-residence with Opera Philadelphia, Gotham Chamber Opera, and Music Theatre-Group, and in 2011–12, she was composer-in-residence with the Albany Symphony.

Mazzoli's 2016 opera *Breaking the Waves*, based on the film by Lars von Trier and created in collaboration with librettist Royce Vavrek, was commissioned by Opera Philadelphia and Beth Morrison Projects. It premiered in September of 2016 and was called "one of the best 21st-century American operas yet" by *Opera News*, "powerful... dark and daring" by the *New York Times*, and "savagely, heartbreaking and thoroughly original" by the *Wall Street Journal*. In February 2012, Beth Morrison Projects presented *Song from the Uproar*, Mazzoli's first multimedia chamber opera, which had a sold-out run at the venerable New York venue The Kitchen. The *Wall Street Journal* called this work "both powerful and new," and the *New York Times* claimed that "in the electric surge of Mazzoli's score you felt the joy, risk and limitless potential of free spirits unbound."

Recent months have included the premiere of Mazzoli's third opera, *Proving Up*, at Washington National Opera; the premiere of *Vespers for a New Dark Age*, an extended work for her ensemble Victoire and Wilco drummer Glenn Kotche, commissioned by Carnegie Hall; and new works performed by pianist Emanuel Ax, the BBC Symphony, the Los

Angeles Philharmonic, and the Detroit Symphony. Upcoming commissions include new works for Opera Philadelphia, the National Ballet of Canada, Opera Omaha, and New York's Miller Theatre.

Mazzoli is the recipient of a Fulbright Grant, a 2015 music grant from the Foundation for Contemporary Arts, and four ASCAP Young Composer Awards. Along with composer Ellen Reid, Mazzoli recently founded Luna Lab, a mentorship program for young female composers, in collaboration with the Kaufman Music Center in New York. Mazzoli teaches composition at the Mannes School of Music (The New School), and her works are published by G. Schirmer.

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About *Enthusiasm Strategies*, Mazzoli writes:

"I think of music itself, particularly the music made by the Kronos Quartet, as a strategy for mustering enthusiasm and joy. It's a way of setting the world in order, a method of carving up time in way that, seemingly by magic, changes our frame of mind, energizes us, and gives us courage and reassurance. In this piece, I tried to combine techniques that were both scary and familiar to me; a cascade of natural harmonics collapses into an ecstatic chorale, which then evaporates into silence. *Enthusiasm Strategies* was composed for the Kronos Quartet as part of their amazing and important educational initiative *Fifty for the Future*. I'm honored to contribute to this project and thrilled to be part of the incredible legacy of this quartet."

For information on Angélique Kidjo's *YanYan-KliYan Senamido*, please see p 7.

Mahsa Vahdat (b. 1973)

The Sun Rises (2016)

Arranged by Sahba Aminikia (b. 1981)

About *The Sun Rises*, Sahba Aminikia writes:

"Mahsa Vahdat is one of the most iconic female singers of contemporary, post-revolutionary Iran. She and her sister Marjan Vahdat have toured around the globe and have held numerous concerts throughout Asia, Europe, North America, and Africa, while maintaining their roles as strong advocates of freedom of expression.

"Since the Islamic revolution in 1979, women have been banned from singing in public, and especially in front of male audiences. Mahsa and Marjan Vahdat's appearance on a scene from the controversial movie about Tehran's underground music scene, *No One Knows About Persian Cats* (2009), while singing without Hijab on a rooftop in Tehran, presented a monumental image of freedom to the young women of my country for decades to come.

"I am honored that I was able to bring the forces of Mahsa Vahdat and Kronos Quartet together and was able to help with this historic collaboration. This piece embodies three of Vahdat's songs from two of her solo albums, *Traces of an Old Vineyard* and *A Capella – The Sun Will Rise*."

For song texts, please see p. 11.

Mahsa Vahdat (b. 1973)

"Vaya, Vaya" (2020)

Arranged by Atabak Elyasi (b. 1964)

About "Vaya, Vaya," Mahsa Vahdat writes:

"Vaya, vaya' is a deep expression of Love to a beloved, constantly transforming into a homeland. Since the pandemic arrived in California in March 2020, for more than one year, the most visited place for me has been a place in Berkeley where a rose garden is situated. I walked there almost every day at the time of sunset, the moment when the sun turns its glow to my motherland, where my breath is interwoven with its soil, the moment when darkness and light embrace each other and when the intense red, dark blue, and golden rays in the clouds create a unique image, while passion, rebellion, glow, hope, and sorrow entwine.

"With my deep longing and desire for my motherland, these words and music came to me like a wonder. This zone in Berkeley is one of my 'dear zones' in life. Wherever I roam in the world, this place will always remain in my heart."

"Vaya, Vaya," music by Mahsa Vahdat and Atabak Elyasi, was commissioned for the Kronos Quartet by the Hamid and Christina Moghadam Program in Iranian Studies at Stanford University, with additional support from the Kronos Performing Arts Association.

For song texts, please see p. 13.

Mahsa Vahdat (b. 1973)
 “Placeless” (arr. Sahba Aminikia)
 “I Was Dead” (arr. Atabak Elyasi)

These songs are a product of an ongoing partnership between Kronos Quartet and Mahsa Vahdat, which began as a collaboration for the 2017 Kronos Festival, and eventually grew into the full-length album, *Placeless*, released in 2019. Vahdat composes most of her songs herself, often using poems by classical Persian

poets like Hafez and Rumi or contemporary ones like Fourough Farokhzad and Mohammad Ibrahim Jafari. Her husband, Atabak Elyasi, who is a composer and also plays the Persian *setar* (a string instrument), often takes part in the arranging of her music.

—Erik Hillestad

For song texts, please see p. 13.

TEXTS

The Sun Rises

Poem by Forough Farokhzad

See how sorrow melts drop by drop
 In my eyes

How my mutinous shadow
 Becomes prey for the Sun

See

How my whole existence is in ruins
 An ember set fire to my being

I am lifted to heights

I am trapped

See

How my entire horizon

Fills with shooting stars

You came from afar

From the land of perfume and light

You set me on a Stellar path

You take me beyond stars

Now that we are treading on heights

Wash me with waves of wine

Wrap me in the velvet of your kiss

Want me in the lasting nights

Leave me no more

Separate me not from these stars

See

How you shine and the Sun rises

—English translation by Sohrab Mahdavi

Vanishing Lines

Poem by Hafez

A life ring is my longing for you,
 drowning, as I am, in wine

Advise the barrel to keep the air locked,
 for the tavern is in ruins

The beloved is gone and in my tearful eyes

Her image can only be drawn in vanishing lines

Wake up my eyes for there is great peril

In this onslaught of sleep of mine

The mountains and plains are full and verdant

This world is but a passing current,
 let us waste no time.

—English translation by Sohrab Mahdavi

My Ruthless Companion

Poem by Rumi

Oh my companion, my ruthless companion

My beloved and my treasurer, my ally and my
 secret bearer

On earth you are my moon, at midnight you
 are my morning dawn

Oh, my sweet mist, you are my protection in
 this storm

You find your way into my soul like a healing
 worm

You are my faith and my religion, a sea of
 gems brimming

You are a torch to night-farers, a rope to the
 drowning

You are a compass to any caravan, you are my
 guide

You are my cellmate in this prison, a laughing
 master at my side

To be in your presence requires a hundred
 times my best stride

—English translation by Sohrab Mahdavi

Vaya, Vaya*Poem by Mahsa Vahdat*

Vaya, Vaya

I'll have wings in your air

I'll be a wave in your voice

I'll be a flame in your flickering heat,
in my cries of wanting you

Bitterly I'll twist in the veins of your vines

I'll be a stubborn cloud in the tears of my
grief for you

Vaya, Vaya

I'll grow green in my sorrow for your passing
yearsI'll stay in love in the sun above your moun-
tain topsI'll be tears in the purity of your streams
at one with my limitless hope for you

Vaya, Vaya

—English translation by Dick Davis

Translator's note: The title, "Vaya, Vaya," is the same word twice: it is a lamentation, an expression of grief. While it is similar to "Alas!" in English, the Persian word here is more colloquial, so as to mean "O God!" or "God help me!"

Placeless*Poem by Rumi*

Muslims, what can I do?

I don't know who I am.

I am neither Christian nor a Jew,

I am no Magian, no Muslim.

I am not from the East, nor from the West.

Not from the land, nor from the sea,

I am not from the shafts of nature,

nor from the spheres of the firmament,

I am not from India, not from China,
not from Bulghar, not from SaqsinI am not from Babylon nor from the land of
Persia.I am not from the world, not from beyond
My place is placelessness. My trace is trace-
lessness.—English translation by
Mahsa Vahdat and Erik Hillestad**I Was Dead***Poem by Rumi*

I was dead, I became alive, I was tears,

I became laughter

The happiness of love came,

and I became eternal happiness

My eyes are full of joy, I have a brave soul

I have courage like a lion, I became the shining
VenusHe told me: you are not crazy enough,
you don't deserve this home

I went and became crazy,

I was entangled with chains

He told me: you are not drunk,

go away, you don't belong to this circle!

I went and became intoxicated,

I was filled with joy

I belong to you, my moon, come and
behold you and me!

Because of his laughter,

I became a laughing garden

—English translation by
Mahsa Vahdat and Erik Hillestad

For more than 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 worldwide, releasing more than 60 recordings, collaborating with many of the world's most accomplished composers and performers, and commissioning more than 1,000 works and arrangements for string quartet. Kronos has received over 40

awards, including the Polar Music, Avery Fisher, and Edison Klassik Oeuvre Prizes, some of the most prestigious awards given to musicians.

Since 1973, Kronos has built an eclectic repertoire for string quartet, performing and recording works by 20th-century masters (Sofia Gubaidulina, Alfred Schnittke), contemporary composers (Sahba Aminikia, Nicole Lizée, Vladimir Martynov, Aleksandra Vrebalov), jazz legends (Thelonious Monk, Maria Schneider), rock artists (Jimi Hendrix, Pete Townshend), and many others.

Integral to Kronos' work is a series of long-running, in-depth associations with many of the world's foremost composers and musicians. Terry Riley's work with Kronos includes *Salome Dances for Peace* (1985–86) and *Sun Rings* (2002). Kronos has also collaborated extensively with Philip Glass, premiering many of his quartets and recording an all-Glass CD (1995); with Serbian composer Aleksandra Vrebalov, who has written more than 25 pieces for Kronos; with Azerbaijan's Franghiz Ali-Zadeh, featured on the album *Mugam Sayagi* (2005); and with Steve Reich, whose string quartets, *Different Trains* (1989), and *Triple Quartet* were written for and recorded by Kronos.

Kronos has shared the stage with performers from around the world such as Chinese *pipa* player Wu Man, Azeri vocalist Alim Qasimov, Bollywood "playback singer" Asha Bhosle, *tabla* virtuoso Zakir Hussain, Inuit throat singer Tanya Tagaq, and visual artist Trevor Paglen. Kronos has also performed and/or recorded with the likes of Paul McCartney, David Bowie, Patti Smith, Allen Ginsberg, Angélique Kidjo, Tom Waits, k.d. lang, Betty Carter, Van Dyke Parks, and Caetano Veloso. In dance, famed choreographers Merce Cunningham, Paul Taylor, Alonzo King, Twyla Tharp, and Eiko & Koma have created pieces with Kronos' music.

Kronos has been featured prominently in film soundtracks, including the Academy Award-nominated documentaries *How to Survive a Plague* (2012) and *Dirty Wars* (2013). The ensemble has also recorded scores by Clint Mansell (*The Fountain* and *Requiem for a Dream*), Philip Glass (*Dracula*), Terry Riley

(*Hochelaga terre des âmes*), and Jacob Garchik (*The Green Fog*). *A Thousand Thoughts: A Live Documentary with the Kronos Quartet*, written and directed by Sam Green and Joe Bini, debuted at Sundance Film Festival in 2018.

The quartet tours extensively each year, appearing in the world's most prestigious concert halls, clubs, and festivals. Kronos' discography on Nonesuch Records is prolific and wide-ranging, including three Grammy-winning albums—Terry Riley's *Sun Rings* (2019), *Landfall* with Laurie Anderson (2018), and Alban Berg's *Lyric Suite* featuring Dawn Upshaw (2003). Among Kronos' recent releases are *Ladilikan* (World Circuit) with Trio Da Kali, an ensemble of *griot* musicians from Mali; *Clouded Yellow* (Cantaloupe Music), a collection of Michael Gordon's works for Kronos; *Placeless* (Kirkelig Kulturverksted) with Iranian vocalists Mahsa and Marjan Vahdat; and *Long Time Passing: Kronos & Friends Celebrate Pete Seeger* (Smithsonian Folkways).

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 the annual Kronos Festival. In 2015, Kronos launched *Fifty for the Future: The Kronos Learning Repertoire*, an education and legacy project that is commissioning—and distributing online for free—50 new works for string quartet written by composers from around the world.

Mahsa Vahdat is an award-winning Iranian singer, composer, and cultural activist dedicated to both her personal lifelong musical and artistic path and the greater cause of freedom of expression. Her artistic work has offered audiences around the globe a deeper appreciation of Iranian poetry and music.

Born in 1973 in Tehran, she received her BA in music from the Tehran University of Arts and learned Persian traditional music with different masters. Since 1995, she has performed as an independent singer and musician in many concerts and festivals around the world. She has also appeared on stage with her sister Marjan Vahdat in many concerts.

Mahsa Vahdat has developed a highly personal style of performance, rooted in Persian classical and regional vocal music traditions and infused with contemporary and innovative expressions and influences. Her many performance and recording projects include collaborations with some of the world's most acclaimed musicians, including (along with Kronos) Mighty Sam McClain, Tord Gustavson, Teatr Zar, SKRUK Choir, and Kitka. Through creative dialogues with her collaborators and explorations as an unaccompanied soloist, she has developed a diverse, unique, and wide-ranging repertoire.

Following her participation in the album *Lullabies from the Axis of Evil* (2004), Vahdat started a long-lasting collaboration with the Norwegian record label Kirkelig Kulturverksted. This collaboration led to the worldwide release of a series of award-winning and critically acclaimed records.

Without being visible in her own society because of restrictions on female solo voices following the Islamic Revolution in 1979 in Iran, Mahsa and her sister Marjan Vahdat have had continuous contact with a large audience that appreciates their art, both in Iran and abroad.

For Mahsa, artistic practice, creative freedom, and humanitarian principles are closely intertwined. She is an extremely effective cultural worker who utilizes the emotive power of her voice to raise awareness of suffering and injustice in the world, while simultaneously delivering messages of hope and positive change.

About Kronos' *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, 50 new works have been commissioned, and scores and parts, as well as supplemental learning materials that include recordings, videos, performance notes, and composer interviews, are available online

at kronosquartet.org. 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.

Peni Candra Rini's *Maduswara*, Terry Riley's *This Assortment of Atoms – One Time Only!*, Missy Mazzoli's *Enthusiasm Strategies*, and Angélique Kidjo's *YanYanKliYan Senamido*—all featured on this evening's program—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.

For the Kronos Quartet/

Kronos Performing Arts Association

Janet Cowperthwaite, *executive director*

Mason Dille, *development manager*

Dana Dizon, *business manager*

Sarah Donahue, *operations manager*

Scott Fraser, *senior sound designer*

Reshena Liao, *creative projects manager*

Nicolás McConnie-Saad,

artistic administrator

Brian Mohr, *sound designer and*

technical manager

Kären Nagy, *strategic initiatives director*

Brian H. Scott, *lighting designer*

Contact

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The Kronos Quartet records
for Nonesuch Records.



Jeremy Geffen

With the fast-approaching end of Fall Semester—and as we move towards the holidays—things are unusually busy on the UC Berkeley campus. The same can be said about Cal Performances, where—this weekend alone—we’ll enjoy visits by an array of world-class talent: the Bay Area’s beloved **Kronos Quartet** with special guest, Persian classical and world music vocalist and composer **Mahsa Vahdat** (Dec 2); musical polymath **Damien Sneed** with his delightful *Joy to the World: A Christmas Musical Journey* program (Dec 3); riveting performer of the 16-string *dan tranh* (zither) **Vân-Ánh Võ** and her acclaimed **Blood Moon Orchestra** in an exciting world premiere (Dec 4); and two of the brightest lights of their generation—choreographer/dancer **Caleb Teicher** (and their amazing dance company) and pianist **Conrad Tao** in the Bay Area premiere of *More Forever*, a fresh, new music and dance collaboration. I’m so happy you could join us during what promises to be a memorable weekend; it’s wonderful that we can gather together again, enjoying great live performances under the same roof!

This robust activity is especially meaningful this year, following such a prolonged period of shutdown! When the pandemic forced Cal Performances to close its doors in March 2020, no one could have imagined what lay ahead. Since then, we’ve witnessed a worldwide health crisis unlike any experienced during our lifetimes, an extended period of political turmoil, recurring incidents of civil unrest and racially motivated violence, and a consciousness-raising human rights movement that has forever—and significantly—changed how each of us views social justice in our time.

Of course, the pandemic remains with us to this date and future challenges—including many adjustments to “normal” procedures and policies—can certainly be expected. I encourage you to check Cal Performances’ website regularly for the most current information regarding our COVID-19 response. First and foremost, I assure you that there is nothing more important to us than the health and safety of our audience, artists, and staff. (And I remind one and all that proof of vaccination is mandatory today, as is protective masking throughout the event.)

Our season continues later this month with an exciting return concert by jazz phenom **Jazzmeia Horn**, a hit on last year’s *Cal Performances at Home* streaming season (Dec 10); the ever-popular **Canadian Brass** with its festive *Making Spirits Bright for 50 Years and Counting!* holiday program (Dec 11); and the long-awaited return to Zellerbach Hall (the group’s favorite home-away-from-home) by the great **Mark Morris Dance Group** (Dec 17–19). And our full 2021–22 calendar offers even more, packed with the kind of adventurous and ambitious programming you’ve come to expect from Cal Performances. In particular, I want to direct your attention to this year’s *Illuminations*: “Place and Displacement” programming, through which we’ll explore both loss and renewal, disempowerment and hope, while seeking paths forward for reclaiming and celebrating vital cultural connections that can fall victim to political and social upheaval.

Please take the opportunity to explore the complete schedule through our website and season brochure and begin planning your performance calendar; now is the perfect time to guarantee that you have the best seats for all the events you plan to attend.

Throughout history, the performing arts have survived incredible challenges: periods of war, economic collapse, and, yes, terrible disease. And if it will take time for us—collectively and individually—to process the events of the past 18 months, I’m certain that the arts have the power

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to play a critical role as we come to terms with what we have experienced and move together toward recovery.

I know you join us in looking forward to what lies ahead, to coming together once again to encounter the life-changing experiences that only the live performing arts deliver. We can't wait to share it all with you during the coming year.

Cal Performances is back. Welcome home!

Jeremy Geffen

Executive and Artistic Director, Cal Performances

COVID-19 Information

Proof of vaccination status is required for entrance and masking is mandatory throughout the event.

COVID-19 information is updated as necessary; please see Cal Performances' website for the most up-to-date policies and information.

UC Berkeley does not promise or guarantee that all patrons or employees on site are vaccinated.

Unvaccinated individuals may be present as a result of exemptions, exceptions, fraudulent verification, or checker error. None of these precautions eliminate the risk of exposure to COVID-19.