

# Cal Performances Presents

---

Sunday, April 15, 2007, 3pm  
Hertz Hall

## Kronos Quartet



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

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

*This presentation is made possible, in part, by the generous support of Liz & Greg Lutz  
and the National Endowment for the Arts.*

*Cal Performances' 2006–2007 Season is sponsored by Wells Fargo.*

# Program

---

Sunday, April 15, 2007, 3pm  
Hertz Hall

## Kronos Quartet

### PROGRAM

- Unknown (Iraq) (arr. Kronos, transcr. Ljova) Oh Mother, the Handsome Man  
Tortures Me (c. 1980s)†
- John Zorn (b. 1953) Selections from *The Dead Man* (1990)\*  
Nocture  
Fantasy  
Prelude  
Etude  
Manifesto  
Meditation (The Blue of Noon)
- Hamza El Din (1929–2006) *Escalay* (Water Wheel) (1989)\*  
(realized by Tohru Ueda)
- Stephen Prutsman (b. 1960) Particle 423 (2006)\* (West Coast premiere)

### INTERMISSION

- Henryk Mikolaj Górecki (b. 1933) *Piesni Spiewaja* (“...songs are sung”),  
String Quartet No. 3, Op. 67 (1994–1995)\*  
(Bay Area premiere)
- I. Adagio — Molto Andante — Cantabile  
II. Largo, Cantabile  
III. Allegro, Sempre ben marcato  
IV. Deciso — Espressivo ma ben tenuto  
V. Largo — Tranquillo

\* *written for Kronos*  
† *arranged for Kronos*

*The Kronos Quartet records exclusively for Nonesuch Records.  
CDs are available online at [www.kronosquartet.org/store](http://www.kronosquartet.org/store).*

## Unknown (Iraq)

### **Oh Mother, the Handsome Man**

#### **Tortures Me (c. 1980s)**

*Arranged by Kronos Quartet*

*Transcribed by Ljova*

To Western ears, North African and Lebanese recordings have chiefly defined Arabic music. But there are sounds less exported that remain unique to their place of origin. The region containing modern Iraq is no exception. In fact, Baghdad has been a leader of musical innovation for millennia. Iraq's unique brand of maqam styles and emotive orchestral epics have been reasonably well documented, yet a wealth of Iraqi sounds remain that haven't been showcased abroad, including the outstanding folk and pop music styles produced by Iraqis—styles know as much for their rhythms as they are for their accompanying dances.

*Oh Mother, the Handsome Man Tortures Me* is an example of the infamous Iraqi *choubi*—a festive, driving rhythmic style that can feature fiddles, double-reed instruments, bass, keyboards and *oud* over its signature beat. What really defines the Iraqi sound are the crisp, rapid-fire machine-gun-style rhythms set atop the main beat. They sound almost electronic—and sometimes they are, but usually this is the work of a unique hand drum of nomadic origin called a *khishba*—aka the *zanbour* (Arabic for “wasp”)—and it appears across the board in many styles of Iraqi music today. Kronos's arrangement is based on a recording produced sometime during the Saddam period, between the 1980s and 2002.

Ljova (Lev Zhurbin) is a composer, arranger and violist. Born in Moscow, he now works out of New York City. Ljova's arrangements have been performed by the Kronos Quartet, Yo-Yo Ma's Silk Road Project, Lara St. John and many others. He has composed more than 70 works, including compositions for orchestras, chamber ensembles, jazz and Latin bands, as well as over a dozen scores for film and theater projects.

Recent commissions include orchestral works for the Staten Island Symphony, the Wild Ginger Philharmonic and the New York Symphonic Arts Ensemble, as well as a chamber music commission from the American Composers Forum.

Program note adapted from liner notes to the album *Choubi! Choubi! Folk & Pop Songs from Iraq*, written by Mark Gergis. Printed courtesy of Sublime Frequencies.

Kronos Quartet's arrangement of *Oh Mother, the Handsome Man Tortures Me* was commissioned for Kronos by Deborah and Creig Hoyt.

## **John Zorn (b. 1953)**

### **The Dead Man (1990)**

Turning a self-described short attention span into a creative asset, the ever-daring composer, saxophonist, MacArthur Fellow and New York “Downtown” music czar, John Zorn, developed a unique approach to composition in the 1980s and early 1990s. Starting with discrete musical ideas—or “moments”—jotted down on file cards whenever inspiration struck, Zorn would create a new work by assembling the cards in a specific order. The resulting music is both endlessly surprising and relentlessly pulse-quickening—an experience often compared to rapidly pushing the preset buttons on a car radio, or to the constantly shifting, “jump cut” imagery of modern films and music videos.

Zorn has long drawn stylistic inspiration from Carl Stalling's soundtracks to the classic Warner Brothers cartoons of the 1940s and 1950s. As Zorn describes it, when you listen to Stalling's music apart from the animated visuals, you “enter a completely new dimension: you are constantly being thrown off balance, yet there is something strangely familiar about it all.”

Zorn's own résumé would seem decidedly off balance, if there weren't something so strangely ingenious about it all. Already a budding composer of contemporary classical music by his mid-teens, Zorn dropped out of

# Program Notes

---

Webster College in St. Louis, inspired to pursue avant-garde jazz improvisation by the likes of saxophonist Anthony Braxton and other members of Chicago's influential Association for the Advancement of Creative Musicians. By the early 1970s, he had settled in Greenwich Village, performing solo sax concerts and beginning to compose the structured improvisations he called "game pieces." From early works like *Lacrosse* (1977) and *Hockey* (1978) to *Cobra* (1984), widely considered the ultimate game piece, Zorn perfected a process of cueing musical events according to ever more sophisticated sets of improvisational rules. In keeping with sporting events, while the rules of a game piece remain the same over time, no two performances of a Zorn game piece ever sound alike.

Beyond creating and directing (or "prompting") the game-pieces and composing and recording other noted file-card works like *Godard* (1985) and *Spillane* (1986), Zorn has led and written for a number of his own ensembles, including the *noir*-infused Naked City and the hardcore improvisational trio, Painkiller. Beginning with his 1992, album-length composition, *Kristallnacht*, Zorn embarked on an exploration of his Jewish identity. This work has reached its fullest expression in the 10-year-old performing quartet and book of compositions called Masada—a project that weds traditional Jewish scales to a brash style of jazz reminiscent of Zorn's saxophone hero, Ornette Coleman. Since the mid-1980s, following in the tradition of composers such as Ennio Morricone and Nino Rota, Zorn has also been a frequent and typically eclectic composer for film. To date, he numbers more than a dozen volumes of *Film Works* releases on his own Tzadik record label, with styles ranging from rambunctious cartoon music to elegiac strings to bossa nova riffs traded between guitar and Chinese *pipa*—often, of course, all on the same album.

John Zorn dedicated *The Dead Man* to Robert Mapplethorpe. *The Dead Man* was commissioned for the Kronos Quartet by Lincoln

Center and the Beigler Trust. This was Zorn's third work for Kronos; *Cat O' Nine Tails* appears on Kronos's recording *Short Stories* and *Forbidden Fruit* appears on Kronos's recording *Winter Was Hard*.

*Note by Matthew Campbell*

## **Hamza El Din (1929–2006)**

### ***Escalay (Water Wheel) (1989)***

*Realized by Tobru Ueda*

In the society of what once was Nubia, the waterwheel was the oldest mechanical device used for farmland irrigation. When Nubian musician Hamza El Din was commissioned by Lincoln Center to compose his first piece for the Kronos Quartet, he sought to recreate both the sounds and the images of that ancient culture. "My country was flooded after the construction of the Aswan dam," El Din explained, "and we lost it after a recorded history of 9,000 years, so I have a nostalgia for that place. *Escalay* is a representation of how to start the waterwheel and let it run."

Born in Nubia in 1929, and educated at the Fouad Institute of Music in Cairo and the Accademia di Santa Cecilia in Rome, El Din was living and teaching in the San Francisco Bay Area at the time of his death in 2006. For *Escalay*, he drew upon both the musical and the cultural traditions of his homeland. "Our music system is Afro-Arab—we are a bridge, musically and culturally between Africa and the Middle East," he said. "I wanted the Quartet to represent the sound of my instrument, the *oud*. The challenge was to make audible the overtones that only the musician can hear from a solo instrument—the 'unheard' voice. Amazingly, Kronos perform it as if they are from that place.

"I was in New York when the Aswan Dam was finished. I lost my village. When I went back and saw my village and my people in a different place, I saw in their eyes the loss. I saw my people were lost. They had moved to an almost semi-desert place. When I came back I was lost

myself. I was playing my *oud*, doing nothing except repeating a phrase. I was on the water wheel, the oldest surviving machine in our land. Whoever sits on that machine will become hypnotized by that noise.

“Terry Riley introduced me to Kronos, who asked me to write a piece for them. They liked the idea of the waterwheel. Everyone who sits behind the oxen which help the waterwheel go round will express himself according to his age. If it’s a child, he’ll sing a children’s song. If it’s a woman or a man, they’ll sing a love song. If it’s an older man, he’ll sing a religious song. I wrote this as the sound of the older man, so with Kronos it becomes a religious song.”

*Escalay* was commissioned for the Kronos Quartet by Lincoln Center for the Performing Arts, and is included on the Quartet’s Nonesuch recording, *Pieces of Africa*.

*Note by Derk Richardson*

## **Stephen Prutsman (b. 1960)** **Particle 423 (2006)**

Born in Los Angeles in 1960, Stephen Prutsman began playing the piano by ear before moving on to more formal music studies. In his early teens, he was the keyboard player for several rock groups, including Cerberus and Vysion. In the early 1990s, he was a medal winner at the Tchaikovsky and Queen Elisabeth piano competitions, which led to performances in various prestigious music centers and with leading orchestras in the United States and Europe. In 2004, Prutsman was appointed to a three-year term to the position of Artistic Partner with the St. Paul Chamber Orchestra, where he acts as composer, arranger, conductor, program host and pianist. Prutsman’s long collaboration with Kronos has resulted in over 40 arrangements of distinctive and varying musical languages.

About *Particle 423*, Stephen Prutsman writes: “So David Harrington invites me for a coffee at one of our usual spots around Ninth Avenue in

San Francisco and says, ‘Think of a giant wall with Scotch-taped fragments, frayed and discolored postcards, photos, notes, drawings... a mosaic of our amazing country. Can you find a way of making a piece that will close our program, and take Kronos from *The Day the Earth Stood Still* to the next step?’ That was the invitation to write an original work for the quintessentially American string quartet Kronos.

“Since its beginnings, every popular song has had some kind of moment, an inspiration or ‘hook,’ which emotionally catches a listener. *Particle 423* employs over 400 of such souvenirs, which are bridged or sewn together by acoustic and taped sound design. As this musical landscape evolves I’ve noticed that structural form has been mostly abandoned. In its place, a musical collage with more and more collected mementos covering that wall from David’s mind.”

Prutsman’s *Particle 423* was commissioned for the Kronos Quartet by the College of Saint Benedict, St. Joseph, Minnesota, in celebration of the renewal of the Benedicta Arts Center.

## **Henryk Mikołaj Górecki (b. 1933)** ***Piesni Spiewaja* (“...songs are sung”),** **String Quartet No. 3, Op. 67 (1994–1995)**

The Kronos Quartet has played an enormous part in the promotion and dissemination of the music of Polish composer Henryk Mikołaj Górecki. It commissioned and premiered his first two quartets—No. 1, *Already It Is Dusk*, Op. 62 (1989), and No. 2, *Quasi una Fantasia*, Op. 64 (1991)—and asked Górecki for a third. He composed the new quartet methodically and rapidly, finishing it in January 1995, but no one could have foreseen that it would be over 10 years before he sent them the new score. The dedication reads: “To the KRONOS Quartet, which has waited patiently for this quartet for so many years (May, 2005).”

In a commentary attached to the end of the manuscript, Górecki confesses: “Only now, in

# Program Notes

---

2005, have I amended it here and there and written it out neatly. In the intervening years there were several dates set for the work's premiere by the Kronos Quartet, who also commissioned this quartet—but I continued to hold back from releasing it to the world. I don't know why." The world premiere was given by Kronos in Bielsko-Biała in southern Poland in October 2005.

Speculating on reasons for this delay is an idle task. It cannot pass unnoticed, however, that Górecki's output since the phenomenon of the Third Symphony in 1992–1993 has been leaner than before. Indeed, apart from some choral music, there has been nothing of major substance since *Little Requiem* (1993). The Third Quartet therefore occupies a key position in understanding the composer's perception of his future path. And the longer the delay, the greater the potential uncertainty. In any event, the Third Quartet, for all the composer's nervousness about it, is a strong and challenging sequel to the first two.

Like its predecessors, the Third Quartet has a subtitle. On this occasion, and reinforcing Górecki's longstanding fascination with "song," his eye was caught by the last words of a Polish translation of a four-line poem by the Russian writer, Velimir Khlebnikov (1885–1922). The customary English translation reads:

*When horses die, they breathe,  
When grasses die, they wither,  
When suns die, they go out,  
When people die, they sing songs.*

According to his publishers, Boosey & Hawkes, Górecki preferred the sense of a more oblique translation of the final phrase, "...songs are sung." In any case, Górecki is insistent that his Third Quartet is in no way a musical interpretation of any of Khlebnikov's poem and that its last line was just an inspirational starting point.

The quartet is imbued with a deep sense of internalised melancholy. The expressive markings, for example, conform to Górecki's habitual emphasis on *tranquillo*, *cantabile*, etc., and their

superlatives. There is also one unusual marking—*MORBIDO*—which occurs shortly after repetitions of a G-major chord a couple of minutes into the fourth movement. The work as a whole seems preoccupied with the elusiveness of memory, with the mind's ability to repeat ideas but to lose itself in them through that very repetition, through its periodic development and both exact and inexact recall. An excellent example is the rather sweet, rising melodic idea just after the start of the only fast movement (III), which at the end falters and peters out. Its closing cadence barely registers.

This example also underlines Górecki's essentially symphonic intentions, as the lack of expressive closure in the third movement propels the listener forwards. Górecki then confuses expectations, starting the fourth movement by repeating another idea from the third. Furthermore, this is the *fortissimo* chordal sequence which is capped by a quote from the first movement of Szymanowski's Second Quartet. Such an iconic citation—a technique often encountered in Górecki's earlier music—intensifies the qualities of memory and recall on an external level. The citation is an expressive device with a substantial pedigree in Górecki's music, from the Medieval and Renaissance citations in *Three Pieces in Old Style* (1963), *Old Polish Music* (1969) and Symphony No. 2, *Copernican* (1972), to the telling use of pre-existing material in the Third Symphony, the *Symphony of Sorrowful Songs* (1976). And the Third Symphony, with its use of Polish hymns, of text from a wartime victim of Nazi imprisonment, and of a Polish folksong to a dead soldier, reminds us that the consequences of war have always been a central part of Górecki's life and a potent influence on his creativity.

The Szymanowski citation apart, the striking features of the Third Quartet include its insistence on melodic thirds, both minor and major, chordal patterns with strong diatonic and sometimes cadential features, and keening dissonances between melody and harmony. Górecki's

cradled harmonies and slow tempi are also foregrounded. There are moments of genuine repose and resolution, of light illuminating the meditative introspection, but for the most part the work is characterized by an underlying restlessness. At the premiere, the audience was rapt, the music seeming to provoke an uncommon sense of identity with its expressive world, taking the listeners beyond accounting for musical content. It seemed to transport them onto a more metaphysical plane, recalling the transcendental qualities of Górecki's *Symphony of Sorrowful Songs* (1976) and *Lerchenmusik: Recitatives and Ariosos* (1986), the works to which, along with the first two string quartets, the Third Quartet is most closely drawn.

*Note by Adrian Thomas*

Henryk Mikołaj Górecki's *Piesni Spiewaja* ("...songs are sung"), String Quartet No. 3, Op. 67, was commissioned for the Kronos Quartet by the Carnegie Hall Corporation, the Angel Stoyanof Commission Fund and the Kosciuszko Foundation. Kronos's recordings of all three of Górecki's string quartets are available on Nonesuch.

\* \* \*

After musical studies in Rybnik and Katowice, Górecki first made his mark as a composer in the mid-1950s, when he found himself at the forefront of the Polish avant-garde at the time of the post-Stalin cultural thaw. His early works show a clear development from the folk-influenced worlds of Szymanowski and Bartók in the *Four Preludes* for piano (1955) and *Songs of Joy and Rhythm* (1956) to the modernist techniques of Webern and Boulez in *Epitafium* (1958) and *Symphony No. 1* (1959), both premiered at the Warsaw Autumn Festival. During the 1960s, Górecki continued in a radical direction in the *Genesis* (1962–1963) and *Muzyczka* (1967–1970) cycles of works, while paring down his compositional material and exploring the folk music traditions of his beloved Tatra region in such works

as *Three Pieces in Old Style* (1963) and *Muzyka staropolska* (Old Polish Music) (1967–1969).

The simple yet monumental style for which Górecki is today renowned became fully established in the 1970s with such works as *Symphony No. 2, Copernican* (1972), the much lauded *Symphony No. 3, Symphony of Sorrowful Songs* (1976), and the large-scale psalm setting for chorus and orchestra, *Beatus Vir* (1979). With his withdrawal from public life due to political and health pressures, the early 1980s saw Górecki concentrating on choral settings and chamber music, including his trio *Lerchenmusik: Recitatives and Ariosos* (1984–1985).

As a result of Poland's increasing political emancipation, Górecki's music has since the late 1980s traveled more widely and attracted new performers and audiences in the West. This renewed interest has led to the composition of two major string quartets, *Already It Is Dusk* (1988) and *Quasi una fantasia* (1991), both commissioned for the Kronos Quartet; performances throughout the world including Górecki features at numerous international festivals; many choreographies to his music; and a series of highly successful new recordings on the Nonesuch label.

Górecki's most noted compositions of the 1990s included *Concerto-Cantata* (1992), for flute and orchestra, and *Kleines Requiem für eine Polka* (1993), recorded by both the Schoenberg Ensemble on Philips and the London Sinfonietta on Nonesuch. Most recently, Górecki has completed two new choral works, *Salve, Sidus Polonorum* (1997–2000), for chorus, percussion and keyboards, and *Lobgesang* (2000), for chorus and glockenspiel.

# About the Artists

---

## Kronos Quartet

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 ensembles 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 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 went on to start to build a compellingly eclectic repertoire for string quartet, performing and recording works by 20th-century masters (Bartók, Shostakovich, Webern), contemporary composers (Sofia Gubaidulina, Arvo Pärt, Alfred Schnittke), jazz legends (Ornette Coleman, Charles Mingus, Thelonious Monk) and artists from even farther afield (rock guitar legend Jimi Hendrix, Pakistani vocal master Pandit Pran Nath, 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 gathered by the space agency; and, most recently, *The Cusp of Magic*, commissioned for Kronos in honor of Riley's 70th birthday celebrations and premiered by Kronos and Chinese *pipa* virtuoso Wu Man in 2005. Kronos 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 2005 release *Mugam Sayagi: Music of Franghiz Ali-Zadeh*; Steve Reich, whose Kronos-recorded *Different Trains* earned a Grammy; Argentina's Osvaldo Golijov, a MacArthur Fellow 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 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*; the renowned American soprano, Dawn Upshaw; Mexican pop-rockers Café Tacuba; the Romanian gypsy band, Taraf de Haidouks; and the unbridled British cabaret trio, the Tiger Lillies. Kronos has performed live with the likes of icons Allen Ginsberg, Modern Jazz Quartet, Tom Waits, Betty Carter and David Bowie, and has appeared on recordings by such diverse talents as singer-songwriters Dave Matthews, Nelly Furtado, Rokia Traoré and Joan Armatrading, as well as Texas yodeler Don Walser.

Kronos's music has also featured prominently in other media, including film (*Requiem for a Dream*, *21 Grams*, *Heat*, *True Stories*) and dance, with noted choreographers such as Merce Cunningham, Twyla Tharp and the duo 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

## About the Artists

---

Wave Festival, Barbican in London, UCLA's Royce Hall, Amsterdam's Concertgebouw 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 that 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, Berg's *Lyric Suite*.

Kronos's recorded work reveals only a fraction of the group's commitment to new music, however. As a non-profit organization based in San Francisco, the Kronos Quartet/Kronos Performing Arts Association has commissioned more than 450 new works and arrangements for string quartet. One of Kronos's most exciting initiatives in this area 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 an approach to music-making as fresh as the new century.

### *For the Kronos Quartet*

Janet Cowperthwaite, *Managing Director*

Laird Rodet, *Associate Director*

Sidney Chen, *Artistic Administrator*

Caiti Crum, *Administrative Assistant*

Scott Fraser, *Sound Designer*

Christina Johnson, *Production &*

*Communications Associate*

Larry Neff, *Production Director*

Lucinda Toy, *Business Operations Manager*

Kronos Quartet

P. O. Box 225340

San Francisco, California 94122-5340

tel. (415) 731-3533

fax (415) 664-7590

[www.kronosquartet.org](http://www.kronosquartet.org)

[www.myspace.com/kronosquartet](http://www.myspace.com/kronosquartet)