

21C Music Festival

Kronos Quartet: *Music for Change*

Friday, December 9, 2022 at 8:00 pm

This is the 1,144th concert in Koerner Hall

Kronos Quartet

David Harrington, violin

John Sherba, violin

Hank Dutt, viola

Sunny Yang, cello

Tanya Tagaq, vocals

Aruna Narayan, sarangi

PROGRAM

Steve Reich: "Pendulum Music" (Canadian premiere)

Traditional: "The Star-Spangled Banner" (inspired by Jimi Hendrix) (arr. Stephen Prutsman & Kronos Quartet) +

Antonio Haskell: "God Shall Wipe All Tears Away" (inspired by Mahalia Jackson) (arr. Jacob Garchik) (Ontario premiere) +

Stacy Garrop: *Glorious Mahalia* (Canadian premiere) *

- I. "Hold on"
- II. "Stave in the ground"
- III. "Are you being treated right"
- IV. "Sometime I feel like a motherless child"
- V. "This world will make you think"

(featuring the recorded voices of Mahalia Jackson and Studs Terkel)

Tanya Tagaq: "Colonizer" (Remix) (arr. Tanya Tagaq & Kronos Quartet) +

INTERMISSION

Aruna Narayan: "Mishra Pilu" (arr. Reena Esmail) (Canadian premiere) **

Komitas: "Groung" (arr. Mary Kouyoumdjian) +

(featuring the recorded voice of David Barsamian)

Abel Meeropol: "Strange Fruit" (inspired by Billie Holiday) (arr. Jacob Garchik) (Ontario premiere) +

Zachary James Watkins: "Peace Be Till" (Canadian premiere) *

(featuring the recorded voice of Dr. Clarence B. Jones)

* Written for Kronos

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

+ Arranged for Kronos

THE MICHAEL AND SONJA KOERNER FUND FOR CLASSICAL PROGRAMMING

The Royal Conservatory's mission to develop future generations of musicians and to bring the world's greatest performers to Toronto has been made possible, in large part, due to the generosity of Michael and Sonja Koerner. In 2022, the Koerners invested \$10 million to create The Michael and Sonja Koerner Fund for Classical Programming, securing the future of the finest classical music concerts at Koerner Hall and our other performance venues. This latest investment, along with the naming of Michael and Sonja Koerner Hall, support of Glenn Gould School students through The Michael & Sonja Koerner Scholarships, the donation of The Michael and Sonja Koerner Early Instrument Collection, the naming of The Alexandra Koerner Yeo Cello Program and The Alexandra Koerner Yeo Chair in Cello, and support of the annual 21C Music Festival, underscores the Koerner family's dedication to music and to the RCM.

Steve Reich (b. 1936)

“Pendulum Music” (1968) for microphones, amplifiers, speakers, and performers (**Canadian premiere**)

“A totally oddball piece” is composer Steve Reich’s description of this rarely performed composition in relation to the balance of his work since the mid-1960s. Not only does “Pendulum Music” forsake traditional instruments for a series of feedback pulses between microphones and amplifiers, the piece also features no written notes, relying instead on chance operations, as each microphone moves through space in a pendular arc. Fittingly enough, the composition itself was inspired by an act of chance.

“I was spending the summer in New Mexico,” Reich recalls, “living and working out there in '68. I went up to Boulder to collaborate with a friend of mine, William Wiley, who’s a painter. We were trying to put together a ‘happening’ with sculpture, black light. While we were working on that, Bruce Nauman, who was a student of Wiley, stopped by. The three of us were in this room and I had one of these Wollensack tape recorders – they’re these funky 1950s models with a cheap electric microphone. It was an old machine by then. I was holding the microphone, which was plugged into the back of the machine so it could record. The speaker was turned up. Being out west, I let it swing back and forth like a lasso. As it passed by the speaker of the machine, it went, ‘Whoop!’ and then it went away.”

“We were all laughing at this and the idea popped into my mind that if you had two or three of these machines, you would have this audible sculpture phase piece ... It’s me making my peace with [John] Cage. If it’s done right, it’s kind of funny.”

In his performance, instructions for the finished work (revised in 1973), Reich states: “Three, four, or more microphones are suspended from microphone boom stands, or some other three to six-foot-high support, by their cables so that all hang the same distance from the floor and are all free to swing with a pendular motion. Each microphone’s cable is plugged into an amplifier which is connected to a loudspeaker. Each microphone hangs a few inches directly above or next to its loudspeaker. Before the performance, each amplifier is turned up just to the point where feedback occurs when a microphone swings directly over or next to its speaker, but no feedback occurs as the mike swings to either side ... The performance begins with performers taking each microphone [and] pulling it back like a swing ... Performers then count off “one, two, three, four, release” and release all the microphones in unison. Thus, a series of feedback pulses are heard which will either be all in unison or not, depending on the gradually changing phase relations of the different microphone pendulums ... The piece is ended sometime shortly after all microphones have come to rest and are feeding back a continuous tone by a performer pulling out all the power cords of the amplifiers.”

- Matthew Campbell

Traditional/Jimi Hendrix (1942–1970)

“The Star-Spangled Banner” (1969/arr. 2003)

Arranged by Stephen Prutsman (b. 1960)

On the morning of Monday, August 18, 1969, guitarist Jimi Hendrix took the stage in Bethel, New York, as the final performer at the Woodstock Festival. His legendary set included a solo guitar version of “The Star-Spangled Banner,” a former British drinking song that is now better known (with lyrics written by Francis Scott Key) as the national anthem of the United States. The controversial performance became an emblematic moment of the late 1960s.

About Hendrix’s performance, David Harrington says: “It’s hard to know what Jimi Hendrix was feeling when he played “The Star-Spangled Banner” at Woodstock. But that single, radical performance in a time of war gave listeners a new way to think about this song. Sometimes, what our government does in our name compels a response like “The Star-Spangled Banner.”

Stephen Prutsman’s arrangement of Jimi Hendrix’s interpretation of the “The Star-Spangled Banner” was written for the Kronos Quartet.

Antonio Haskell

“God Shall Wipe All Tears Away” (1935) (**Ontario premiere**)

Arranged by Jacob Garchik (b. 1976)

When Mahalia Jackson first recorded “God Shall Wipe All Tears Away” in 1937, she was relatively unknown, an aspiring artist who had migrated 10 years earlier to Chicago from her New Orleans birthplace. The song – based on Revelation 21:4 in the King James Bible: “And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away” – was composed in 1935 by New Orleans native Antonio Haskell. The 25-year-

old Jackson recorded her seminal version for the Decca Coral label on May 21, 1937, along with "God's Gonna Separate the Wheat From the Tares," "My Lord," and "Keep Me Everyday." The session was a commercial failure.

But seven decades later, well after Jackson became internationally renowned as the Queen of Gospel, and "God Shall Wipe All Tears Away" was ensconced as a gospel masterwork (recorded by Dorothy Love Coates & the Gospel Harmonettes, the Pilgrim Travelers, and many others), Jackson's performance caught the attention of Kronos Quartet founder and artistic director David Harrington. "The song was on the first CD of a French box set of the complete recordings of Mahalia Jackson," Harrington recalls, "and it totally jumped out at me – the tempo, the sound of the organ, the emotion in her voice – it was all astounding. I just loved this song."

Jacob Garchik initially arranged "God Shall Wipe All Tears Away" for the quartet's collaborations with the Malian ensemble Trio Da Kali – in concert and on the 2017 recording *Ladilikan*. With singer Hawa Kassé Mady Diabaté delivering the vocal in an impassioned contralto akin to that of Jackson, the strings supplied the accompaniment that had been played on organ by Estelle Allen in 1937. Retooling the piece for Kronos' performance repertoire came naturally. "I looked at the arrangement," Harrington explains, "and realized that [violinist] John [Sherba] and [cellist] Sunny [Yang] and I could play all the chord notes – most of the time we're playing double stops – and that Hank [Dutt] could play the melody on viola."

All four musicians pored over the 1937 Mahalia Jackson recording. "It became like a score, really," Harrington says. "Hank, in particular, studied Mahalia's vocal vocabulary. The biggest challenge was getting the emotional message of the voice." For Harrington, Sherba, and Yang to sound even more organ-like, Kronos employs a sound design originally developed for their interpretation of the Swedish folk song "Tusen Tankar" on which, Harrington says, "we needed to approximate a harmonium." With Dutt filling Mahalia Jackson's lead role, the other three musicians use heavy, metal practice mutes that dampen the strings, and sound engineer Scott Fraser adds various effects, including an octave divider on the cello.

"It's an extension of our work," Harrington notes. "It's very natural. The more I've played with Hank over the years, the more I've known that his sound and Mahalia's deserve mention in the same sentence. The performance brings together something that belongs together."

- Derk Richardson

Stacy Garrop (b. 1969)

Glorious Mahalia (2017) (Canadian premiere)

Stacy Garrop is a freelance composer whose music is centered on dramatic and lyrical storytelling. Garrop has received the Barlow Prize, a Fromm Music Foundation grant, three Barlow Endowment commissions, and the Sackler Music Composition Prize, along with prizes from competitions sponsored by the Detroit Symphony Orchestra, Civic Orchestra of Chicago, Omaha Symphony, New England Philharmonic, Boston Choral Ensemble, Utah Arts Festival, and Pittsburgh New Music Ensemble. Theodore Presser Company publishes her chamber and orchestral works; she self-publishes her choral pieces under Inkjar Publishing Company. She is a recording artist with Cedille Records with pieces on nine CDs; her works are also commercially available on 10 additional labels. She is currently serving as Composer-in-Residence with the Champaign-Urbana Symphony Orchestra, sponsored by New Music USA and the League of American Orchestras. For more information, please visit her website at www.garrop.com or her all-things-composition blog at www.composerinklings.com/

About *Glorious Mahalia*, Garrop writes: "Louis 'Studs' Terkel, the Pulitzer Prize-winning writer and oral historian, hosted a daily nationally syndicated radio broadcast show from Chicago's WFMT station from 1952 to 1997. Studs's curious, inquisitive nature led him to interview people from all walks of life over the course of his career. For WFMT alone, he conducted over 5,000 interviews. Before he worked for WFMT, Studs had a radio program called 'The Wax Museum' on WENR in Chicago. It was on this radio network that Studs first featured the glorious voice of Mahalia Jackson.

"Studs heard Mahalia sing for the first time around 1946. He was in a record store in Chicago when Mahalia's voice rang out over the store's speakers. Studs was captivated; he had to meet the woman who possessed that remarkable voice. At that time, Mahalia was gaining fame as a singer of gospels and spirituals in black churches both within Chicago and out of it, as she did a fair amount of touring around the country. Outside of these black communities, however, Mahalia was not yet known. With a little sleuthing, Studs discovered where she regularly sang, at the Greater Salem Baptist Church on the South Side of Chicago. Studs went to the church, introduced himself to Mahalia, and invited her to sing on his radio program. Studs and Mahalia developed a close friendship over the ensuing decades, and they occasionally worked together professionally. As Mahalia rose to international fame and became known as the greatest gospel singer of her time, she and Studs never lost contact.

"In researching WFMT's Studs Terkel Radio Archive, I found several broadcasts when Studs featured Mahalia Jackson and her recordings on his show. Two broadcasts in particular stood out. The first broadcast occurred in 1963, when the pair sat down for a conversation that covered a wide range of topics, including Mahalia's experiences of working in the South, the continuing hardships she faces being a woman of colour, and the civil rights efforts of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., Reverend Ralph Abernathy, and many others (including Mahalia, who was a staunch supporter of Dr. King). The second broadcast dates from 1957; it features Mahalia performing a number of gospels and spirituals for a live audience at a hotel in Chicago. In crafting my composition, I decided to highlight many of the salient points of Studs's and Mahalia's 1963 discussion, with a musical performance from the 1957 concert featured prominently in the work.

"Glorious Mahalia" consists of five movements. In movement 1, Mahalia discusses the origin and meaning of the spiritual "Hold on." In "Stave in the ground" (movement 2), she and Studs talk about the work she did when living in the South, and the continuing prejudice she faces. This is followed by a more heated discussion between Studs and Mahalia in "Are you being treated right" (movement 3). The fourth movement features Mahalia's soulful performance of the spiritual "Sometime I feel like a motherless child." The piece concludes with "This world will make you think" (movement 5), in which Mahalia speaks of her hope that we can unite as one nation.

"Kronos Quartet commissioned *Glorious Mahalia* for Carnegie Hall's *The 60's: The Years That Changed America* concert series. I wish to thank Kronos Quartet's violinist David Harrington for suggesting Mahalia Jackson's interviews with Studs Terkel as the topic for the piece, as well as Tony Macaluso, Director of the WFMT Radio Network and the Studs Terkel Radio Archive, and Allison Schein, Archivist for the Studs Terkel Radio Archive, for their help in locating and securing my chosen broadcasts within the Archive."

Voice of Studs Terkel courtesy of the Estate of Studs Terkel. Voice of Mahalia Jackson courtesy of the Estate of Mahalia Jackson. Studs Terkel Radio Archive, courtesy Chicago History Museum and WFMT Radio Network.

Stacy Garrop's Glorious Mahalia was commissioned for the Kronos Quartet by Carnegie Hall, with support from David Harrington Research and Development Fund.

Tanya Tagaq (b. 1975)

"Colonizer" (Remix) (2021)

Arranged by Tanya Tagaq, Kronos Quartet, and Joel Tarman

From Ikaluktutiak (Cambridge Bay, Nunavut), internationally celebrated artist Tanya Tagaq is an improvisational singer, avant-garde composer, and bestselling author. A member of the Order of Canada, Polaris Music Prize and Juno Award winner, and recipient of multiple honorary doctorates, Tagaq is an original disruptor, a world-changing figure at the forefront of seismic social, political, and environmental change. Tanya's latest album, *Tongues*, was released through Six Shooter Records on January 21, 2022.

About "Colonizer," Tanya Tagaq writes: "Colonizer is a statement. There is guilt in complacency. Accountability means taking action. Nothing will change until we demand it changes. The gavel needs to change hands."

Aruna Narayan (b. 1955)

"Mishra Pilu" (2020) (Canadian premiere)

Arranged by Reena Esmail (b. 1983)

Born in Mumbai, India, Aruna Narayan Kalle plays the sarangi, an ancient north Indian bowed instrument considered one of the most difficult to master, and one of the more undeveloped instruments in both its physical and musical aspects. Its traditional role as an accompaniment instrument for vocal music kept it further in the background. Narayan's father, renowned Sarangi maestro Pandit Ram Narayan, emerged as its messiah, and due to his efforts, the sarangi is now well ensconced in the mainstream of the Indian performing arts.

Although Narayan began her music training at the rather late age of 18, she made fast progress studying intensively with her father for several years. She has fully captured her father's disciplined, serious style, yet has also developed a unique voice for her instrument with a warm and generous musical temperament. Her playing is impressive in its subtlety, precision, and grace as well as in its powerful and weighty bowing. As a recipient of Pandit Ram Narayan's musical legacy, she has consistently worked towards maintaining a highly respectable profile for her instrument.

Narayan was a featured soloist in a unique presentation of the music of Vivaldi's *Four Seasons*, performed by Tafelmusik Baroque Orchestra. An hour-long documentary film about this project with an exclusive profile of her has been aired by the CBC and the Bravo channels on several occasions. Her music has been featured in several international and Hollywood films, and she regularly teaches in the school system, introducing young people to Indian music and the sarangi. Her recordings are available on the Nimbus (UK) and Zig-Zag (France) labels. In addition to her international performances, she frequently appears in the National Program of Music on Doordarshan (TV) and other networks in India. Presently she resides in Toronto, where she teaches and performs.

"This piece is based on Raag Mishra Pilu. *Mishra* means a mixture of a few different raags that are woven into a central theme. Raag Pilu has a textbook ascending and descending structure. However, because it allows for the inclusion of all 12 notes, it is generally conducive to a wider range of improvisation than the traditional discipline of a raag."

"Since the Kronos Quartet is known for their many successful collaborations with different genres of music, I felt that "Mishra Pilu" would be a perfect representation of an Indian classical music bouquet! I have maintained the usual format – the "alaap" which is the first slow movement, followed by a "bandish," a composition set to a 16-beat rhythm cycle called *teental*. Several of these cycles are devoted to a few different raags, returning to the principal line in Pilu."

- Aruna Narayan

Aruna Narayan's Mishra Pilu was 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 the 21C Music Festival at the Royal Conservatory of Music, Carnegie Hall, and many others.

Launched in the 2015-16 season, *Kronos' Fifty for the Future* has commissioned 50 new works devoted to contemporary approaches to the string quartet and designed expressly for the training of students and emerging professionals. Digital materials for all 50 works, including scores, recordings, and performance notes, can be accessed online for free.

Komitas (1869–1935)

Grong (c. 1912)

Arranged by Mary Kouyoumdjian (b. 1983)

Mary Kouyoumdjian is a composer and documentarian with projects ranging from concert works to multimedia collaborations and film scores. As a first generation Armenian-American and having come from a family directly affected by the Lebanese Civil War and Armenian genocide, she uses a sonic palette that draws on her heritage, interest in music as documentary, and background in experimental composition to progressively blend the old with the new. A strong believer in freedom of speech and the arts as an amplifier of expression, her compositional work often integrates recorded testimonies with resilient individuals and field recordings of place to invite empathy by humanizing complex experiences around social and political conflict.

Kouyoumdjian has received commissions for such organizations as the New York Philharmonic, Kronos Quartet, Carnegie Hall, Metropolitan Museum of Art, Beth Morrison Projects/OPERA America, Alarm Will Sound, Bang on a Can, International Contemporary Ensemble, Brooklyn Youth Chorus, the American Composers Forum, Roomful of Teeth, WQXR, REDSHIFT, Experiments in Opera, Helen Simoneau Danse, the Nouveau Classical Project, Music of Remembrance, Friction Quartet, Ensemble Oktoplus, and the Los Angeles New Music Ensemble among others. Her work has been performed internationally at Carnegie Hall, Lincoln Center, New York's Museum of Modern Art (MoMA), the Metropolitan Museum of Art, MASS MoCA, the Barbican Centre, Brooklyn Academy of Music (BAM), Millennium Park, Benaroya Hall, Prototype Festival, the New York Philharmonic Biennial, Cabrillo Festival, Big Ears Festival, 21C Music Festival, and Cal Performances. Her residencies include those with EMPAC, Buffalo String Works, Alarm Will Sound/The Mizzou International Composers Festival, Roulette/The Jerome Foundation, Montalvo Arts Center, and Exploring the Metropolis. Her music has been described as "eloquently scripted" and "emotionally wracking" by *The New York Times* and as "politically fearless" and "the most harrowing moments on stage at any New York performance" by *New York Music Daily*. In her work as a composer, orchestrator, and music editor for film, she has collaborated on a diverse array of motion pictures, including orchestrating on the soundtracks to *The Place Beyond the Pines* (Focus Features) and *Demonic* (Dimension Films).

Kouyoumdjian holds a D.M.A and M.A. in composition from Columbia University, where she studied primarily with Zosha Di Castri, Georg Friedrich Haas, Fred Lerdahl, and George Lewis; an M.A. in Scoring for Film & Multimedia from New York University; and a B.A. in Music Composition from the University of California, San Diego, where she studied with Chaya Czernowin, Steven Kazuo Takasugi, Anthony Davis, Steven Schick, and Chinay Ung. Dedicated to new music advocacy, Kouyoumdjian is a co-founder of the annual new music conference New Music Gathering, served as the founding executive director of contemporary music ensemble Hotel Elefant, and served as co-artistic director of Alaska's new music festival Wild Shore New Music. As an avid educator, Kouyoumdjian is Assistant Professor of Composition at Boston Conservatory at Berklee and Lecturer at Columbia University; she has been on faculty at The New School, Brooklyn College's Feirstein School of Cinema, Mannes Prep, and the New York Philharmonic's Very Young Composers program. Kouyoumdjian is proud to be published by Schott's PSNY.

About *Grong*: The 19th-century poem titled "Grong" (Crane) by Hovhaness Tumanian was set by the Armenian monk and composer known as Komitas (born Soghomon Soghomonian). Ordained as a priest, Komitas was also a singer and a musicologist, becoming a central figure in Armenian music who then witnessed the 1915 Armenian genocide. This arrangement is based on a version sung by Zabelle Panosian (1893–1986), recorded in 1916. Panosian, born in Armenia but living in New York at the time of this rendition, is known to have recorded only a dozen songs. The poem reads, in part, "A crane has lost its way across the heavens, / From yonder stormy cloud I hear him cry./ ...I am exiled from my ruined nest, / And roam with faltering steps from hill to hill./ ... Every bird its homeward way can trace, / But I must roam in darkness, lone and lost."

The prerecorded backing track includes excerpts from a poem by investigative journalist David Barsamian in response to the question "Why is it important to talk about the Armenian genocide 100 years later?"

Mary Kouyoumdjian's arrangement of Grong by Komitas was written for the Kronos Quartet.

Abel Meeropol (1903–1986)

"Strange Fruit" (1939, arranged 2016) (Ontario premiere)

Arranged by Jacob Garchik (b. 1976)

Best known from Billie Holiday's haunting 1939 rendition, the song "Strange Fruit" is a harrowing portrayal of the lynching of a black man in the American South. While many people assume that the song was written by Holiday herself, it actually began as a poem by Abel Meeropol, a Jewish schoolteacher and union activist from the Bronx who later set it to music. Disturbed by a photograph of a lynching, the teacher wrote the stark verse and brooding melody under the pseudonym Lewis Allan in the late 1930s. Meeropol and his wife Anne are also notable because they adopted Robert and Michael Rosenberg, the orphaned children of the executed communists Julius and Ethel Rosenberg.

"Strange Fruit" was first performed at a New York teachers' union meeting and was brought to the attention of the manager of Cafe Society, a popular Greenwich Village nightclub, who introduced Billie Holiday to the writer. Holiday's record label refused to record

the song but Holiday persisted and recorded it on a specialty label instead. The song was quickly adopted as the anthem for the anti-lynching movement. The haunting lyrics and melody made it impossible for white Americans and politicians to continue to ignore the Southern campaign of racist terror. (According to the Center for Constitutional Rights, between 1882 and 1968, mobs lynched 4,743 persons in the United States, over 70 percent of them African Americans.)

The lyrics read, in part: "Southern trees bear a strange fruit, / Blood on the leaves and blood at the root, / Black bodies swinging in the southern breeze, / Strange fruit hanging from the poplar trees."

Adapted from notes by Independent Lens for the film *Strange Fruit*.

Jacob Garchik's arrangement of *Strange Fruit* by Abel Meeropol was commissioned for the Kronos Quartet by the David Harrington Research and Development Fund.

Zachary James Watkins (b. 1980)

"Peace Be Till" (2017) (Canadian premiere)

Zachary James Watkins studied composition with Janice Giteck, Jarrad Powell, Robin Holcomb, and Jovino Santos Neto at Cornish College. In 2006, he received an MFA in Electronic Music and Recording Media from Mills College, where he studied with Chris Brown, Fred Frith, Alvin Curran, and Pauline Oliveros. Watkins has received commissions from Documenta 14, Kronos Quartet, The Living Earth Ensemble, sfsound, and the Seattle Chamber Players, among others. His Suite for String Quartet was awarded the Paul Merritt Henry Prize for Composition, and has subsequently been performed at The Lab's 25th anniversary celebration (San Francisco), the Labor Sonor Series at kunsthaus KuLe (Berlin), and as part of the Town Hall New Music Marathon (Seattle) featuring violist Eyvind Kang.

In 2008, Watkins premiered a new multi-media work entitled *Country Western* as part of the Meridian Gallery's Composers in Performance Series, which received grants from the American Music Center and The Foundation for Contemporary Arts. An excerpt of this piece is published on a compilation album entitled *The Harmonic Series*. He recently completed *Documentado / Undocumentado*, a multimedia interactive book in collaboration with Guillermo Gómez Peña, Gustavo Vasquez, Jennifer Gonzalez, and Felicia Rice. ARTLIES described his sound art work *Third Floor: Designed Obsolescence* as ""a metaphor for the breakdown of the dream of technology and the myth of our society's permanence."

Watkins has performed in numerous festivals across the United States, Mexico, and Europe. His band Black Spirituals opened for pioneering drone metal band Earth during their 2015 European tour. He releases music on the labels Sige, Cassauna, Confront (UK), The Tapeworm, and Touch (UK). November magazine, ITCH, Walrus Press, and the New York Miniature Ensemble have published his writings and scores. Watkins has been an artist-in-residence at the Espy Foundation, Djerassi, and the Headlands Center for The Arts.

About "Peace Be Till," Watkins writes: "My compositions are interested in questions most of which I have yet to define. One clear concern is *high vibration resonance*. This can be understood any way you wish, as each of the three words have complex meanings. For me this phrase represents an interest in imagining radical energy exchange / transformation. Composing relationships that have potential to excite, resonate, grow, energize.

"Over time my output for new through-composed works has focused on site specificity, individuals, economy of resources. I often attempt single-page scores and I always try to write for specific individuals and rooms if at all possible. Strategies designed to investigate *high vibration resonance*.

"'Peace Be Till,' written for the Kronos Quartet, is my first truly substantial commission. When David Harrington contacted me in early 2017, I was absolutely beside myself. We met soon after and he proposed a vision that involved an important historical time and place: Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.'s "I Have a Dream Speech" during the March on Washington on August 28, 1963. David shared an inspiring moment during this speech when Mahalia Jackson, artist and close friend of Dr. King, shouts: "Tell them about the dream! Tell them about the dream!" This instinctual cry to action is understood to have inspired Dr. King to stray from his prepared speech and launch into an improvised version of "I Have a Dream" that comrade Clarence Jones played a role in drafting.

"'Peace Be Till'" is about the legacy of America's Civil Rights Movement, the important role artists play in critical social justice movements and the necessary dreams today. As an American born in 1980 of mixed raced African and European-American heritage, I feel that I am a direct result of this struggle. A family that believed that we are one and that America is capable of embracing diversity. From day one I have always experienced racialized America and yet feel a privilege being male and heterosexual. Times are still tough. This piece pays homage to the artist's instinct to inspire and activate, as well as our ability to wrestle with the sensitive nature of things. In my case I deal with the physics and potential power of sound.

"In the spring of 2017, David Harrington and I met with Dr. King's personal lawyer and speechwriter Dr. Clarence B. Jones at the Women's Audio Mission in San Francisco. We placed microphones in a room and recorded a conversation that focused on Dr. Jones's own upbringing, his love of music, how he met Dr. King (a life-changing event which he calls "the making of a disciple"), the powerful "I Have a Dream" speech, as well as sharing ideas about current realities. These recorded stories became my blueprint for this composition. The role of Mahalia in our human story is equally substantial and I invited a close friend and collaborator Amber McZeal to contribute by resonating her energy and voice sympathetically throughout the accompanying sound collage. This work explores simultaneous threads that weave in and out of each other with an intention to nurture and breathe.

"I want to deeply thank the Kronos Quartet for believing in me; Dr. Clarence B. Jones for his power and service to each of us; Amber McZeal for her love, depth, and inspiration during this intense process; Mahalia Jackson for her unbelievable artistry and strength; and lastly Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., for living, breathing, sacrificing for love and social justice."

Zachary James Watkins's Peace Be Till was commissioned for the Kronos Quartet by Carnegie Hall, with additional support from the David Harrington Research and Development Fund.

Kronos Quartet

For nearly 50 years, San Francisco's Kronos Quartet – David Harrington (violin), John Sherba (violin), Hank Dutt (viola), and Sunny Yang (cello) – has reimagined what the string quartet experience can be. One of the most celebrated and influential groups of our era, Kronos has given thousands of concerts worldwide, released more than 70 recordings, and collaborated with many of the world's most accomplished composers and performers across many genres. Through its nonprofit organization, Kronos Performing Arts Association (KPAA), Kronos has commissioned more than 1,000 works and arrangements for quartet. Kronos has received more than 40 awards, including the Polar Music, Avery Fisher, and Edison Klassiek Oeuvre Prizes.

Integral to Kronos' work is a series of long-running commissioning collaborations with hundreds of composers worldwide, including Terry Riley, Aleksandra Vrebalov, Tanya Tagaq, Philip Glass, inti figgis-vizueta, Fodé Lassana Diabaté, and Steve Reich. In its most ambitious commissioning effort to date, KPAA has recently completed *50 for the Future: The Kronos Learning Repertoire*. Through this initiative, Kronos has commissioned – and distributed online for free – 50 new string quartet works written by composers from around the world.

In recordings, Kronos has collaborated with artists including Wu Man, Zakir Hussain, Asha Bhosle, Mahsa Vahdat, and Nine Inch Nails. Kronos has performed live with the likes of Paul McCartney, Allen Ginsberg, Rokia Traoré, David Bowie, Rhiannon Giddens, Caetano Veloso, and The National, among many others.

The quartet tours for several months each year, appearing in celebrated venues, including Carnegie Hall (New York), Palacio de Bellas Artes (Mexico City), the Barbican (London), the Muziekgebouw (Amsterdam), Shanghai Concert Hall, Suntory Hall (Tokyo), and the Sydney Opera House.

Kronos' expansive discography on Nonesuch includes three Grammy Award-winning albums—Terry Riley's *Sun Rings* (2019), *Landfall* with Laurie Anderson (2018), and Alban Berg's *Lyric Suite* (2003) – along with dozens of other acclaimed releases. Kronos' most recent recording is *Mÿ Lai* (2022), an opera by Jonathan Berger and Harriet Scott Chessman. Kronos' work has also featured prominently in many films, including the "live documentary" *A Thousand Thoughts*, written and directed by Sam Green and Joe Bini, which premiered at the Sundance Film Festival in 2018.

Based in San Francisco, the nonprofit KPAA staff manages all aspects of Kronos' work, including commissioning, concert tours, and local performances, recordings, education programs, and an annual *Kronos Festival* in San Francisco.

Kronos Quartet and Tanya Tagaq made their Koerner Hall debuts on May 25, 2016, during the 21C Music Festival. Aruna Narayan is making her Royal Conservatory debut tonight.