

"Viscerally powerful, both shocking
and fascinating in equal measure"

—David Kettle, *The Scotsman*

Kronos Quartet

Beyond Zero: 1914-1918

Saturday, February 7, 2015
The Englert Theatre
Hancher
University of Iowa



HANCHER

THE
UNIVERSITY
OF IOWA

THE PROGRAM

KRONOS QUARTET

David Harrington *violin*

John Sherba *violin*

Hank Dutt *viola*

Sunny Yang *cello*

Brian H. Scott *Lighting Supervisor*

Scott Fraser *Sound Designer*

Good Medicine from **Salome Dances for Peace***

Terry Riley

Flow⁺

Laurie Anderson; arr. Jacob Garchik

Groung⁺

Komitas; arr. Mary Kouyoumdjian

The Beatitudes⁺

Vladimir Martynov

Bombs of Beirut[°]

Mary Kouyoumdjian

I. Before the War

II. The War

III. After the War

Intermission

Beyond Zero: 1914-1918*

A new work for quartet with film

Aleksandra Vrebalov, *composer*

Bill Morrison, *filmmaker*

David Harrington and Drew Cameron, *creative consultants*

Janet Cowperthwaite, *producer*

Kronos Performing Arts Association, *production management*

Program subject to change.

* Written for Kronos

+ Arranged for Kronos

° Written for Kronos; co-commissioned by Hancher/University of Iowa

Please Note: Tonight's performance of *Bombs of Beirut* includes actual recordings of the sounds of warfare, including incoming missiles and the detonation of bombs, all at high decibel levels. These are loud sounds that continue for approximately four minutes. Audience members may wish to avoid this piece if there is any history of PTSD, anxiety disorders, or other psychological or medical conditions that would likely be exacerbated by exposure to such sounds.

THE ARTISTS



Photo: Jay Blakesberg

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

Kronos' adventurous approach dates back to the ensemble's origins. In 1973, David Harrington was inspired to form Kronos after hearing George Crumb's *Black Angels*, a highly unorthodox, Vietnam War-inspired work featuring bowed water glasses, spoken word passages, and electronic effects. Kronos then began building a compellingly diverse repertoire for string quartet, performing and recording works by twentieth-century masters (Bartók, Webern, Schnittke), contemporary composers (John Adams, Osvaldo Golijov, Aleksandra Vrebalov), jazz legends (Ornette Coleman, Charles Mingus, Thelonious Monk), rock artists (Jimi Hendrix, Amon Tobin, and Sigur Rós), and artists who truly defy genre (Laurie Anderson, Trimpin, Meredith Monk).

Integral to Kronos' work is a series of long-running, in-depth collaborations with many of the world's foremost composers. One of the quartet's most frequent composer-collaborators is "Father of Minimalism" Terry Riley, whose work with Kronos includes *Salome Dances for Peace* (1985–86); *Sun Rings* (2002), a multimedia, NASA-commissioned ode to the earth and its people,

featuring celestial sounds and images from space (Hancher co-commissioned *Sun Rings*, which premiered at the auditorium and featured UI students and sounds from space recorded by UI faculty member Don Gurnett); and *The Serquent Risadome*, premiered during Kronos' "40th Anniversary Celebration" at Carnegie Hall in 2014. Kronos commissioned and recorded the three string quartets of Polish composer Henryk Górecki, with whom the group worked for more than 25 years. The quartet has also collaborated extensively with composers such as Philip Glass, recording a CD of his string quartets in 1995 and premiering String Quartet No. 6 in 2013, among other projects; Azerbaijan's Franghiz Ali-Zadeh, whose works are featured on the full-length 2005 release *Mugam Sayagi*; Steve Reich, from Kronos' performance of the Grammy-winning composition *Different Trains* (1989) to the September 11-themed *WTC 9/11* (2011); and many more.

Kronos counts numerous performers from around the world among its collaborators, including the Chinese pipa virtuoso Wu Man; Azeri master vocalist Alim Qasimov; legendary Bollywood "playback singer" Asha Bhosle, featured on Kronos' 2005 Grammy-nominated CD *You've Stolen My Heart: Songs from R.D. Burman's Bollywood*; Inuit throat singer Tanya Tagaq; indie rock band The National; Mexican rockers Café Tacvba; sound artist and instrument builder Walter Kitundu; and the Romanian gypsy band Taraf de Haïdouks. Kronos has performed live with the likes of Paul McCartney, Allen Ginsberg, Zakir Hussain, Modern Jazz Quartet, Noam Chomsky, Rokia Traoré, Tom Waits, David Barsamian, Howard Zinn, Betty Carter, and David Bowie, and has appeared on recordings by artists such as Nine Inch Nails, Dan Zanes, DJ Spooky, Dave Matthews, Nelly Furtado, Joan Armatrading, and Don Walser. In dance, the famed choreographers Merce Cunningham, Paul Taylor, Twyla Tharp, Eiko & Koma, and Paul Lightfoot and Sol León (Nederlands Dans Theater) have created pieces with Kronos' music.

Kronos' work has also featured prominently in a number of films, including two recent Academy Award-nominated documentaries: the AIDS-themed *How to Survive a Plague* (2012) and *Dirty Wars* (2013), an exposé of covert warfare for which Kronos' David Harrington served as Music Supervisor. Kronos also performed scores by Philip Glass for the films *Mishima* and *Dracula* (a 1999 restored edition of the 1931 Tod Browning-Bela Lugosi classic) and by Clint Mansell for the Darren Aronofsky films *Noah* (2014), *The Fountain* (2006), and *Requiem for a Dream* (2000). Additional films featuring Kronos' music include *21 Grams* (2003), *Heat* (1995), and *True Stories* (1986).

The quartet spends five months of each year on tour, appearing in concert halls, clubs, and festivals around the world including Lincoln Center Out of Doors, BAM Next Wave Festival, Carnegie Hall, the Barbican in London, WOMAD, UCLA's Royce Hall, Amsterdam's Concertgebouw, Shanghai Concert Hall, and the Sydney Opera House. Kronos is equally prolific and wide-ranging on recordings. The ensemble's expansive discography on Nonesuch Records includes collections like *Pieces of Africa* (1992), a showcase of African-born composers, which simultaneously topped Billboard's Classical and World Music lists; 1998's ten-disc anthology, *Kronos Quartet: 25 Years; Nuevo* (2002), a Grammy- and Latin Grammy-nominated celebration of Mexican culture; and the 2004 Grammy-winner, Alban Berg's *Lyric Suite*, featuring renowned soprano Dawn Upshaw. Other recent releases include *Rainbow* (Smithsonian Folkways, 2010), in collaboration with musicians from Afghanistan and Azerbaijan; and *Aheym: Kronos Quartet Plays Music by Bryce Dessner* (Anti-, 2013). Kronos' two most recent releases, unveiled by Nonesuch simultaneously in 2014 in celebration of the Quartet's 40th Anniversary Season, are *Kronos*

Explorer Series, a five-CD retrospective boxed set; and the single-disc *A Thousand Thoughts*, featuring mostly unreleased recordings from throughout Kronos' career. Music publishers Boosey & Hawkes and Kronos have released two editions of *Kronos Collection* sheet music: *Volume 1* (2006), featuring three Kronos-commissioned works; and *Volume 2* (2014), featuring six Kronos-commissioned arrangements by composer Osvaldo Golijov.

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

With a staff of ten based in San Francisco, the non-profit Kronos Performing Arts Association (KPAA) manages all aspects of Kronos' work, including the commissioning of new works, concert tours, concert presentations in the San Francisco Bay Area, education programs, and more. One of KPAA's most exciting initiatives is the *Kronos: Under 30 Project*, a unique commissioning and residency program for composers under age 30 that has now added five new works to the Kronos repertoire. By cultivating creative relationships with emerging and established artists from around the world, Kronos and KPAA reap the benefit of decades of wisdom while maintaining a fresh approach to music-making.

PROGRAM NOTES

Good Medicine from **Salome Dances for Peace** (1985–86)

Terry Riley (b. 1935)

Salome Dances for Peace was commissioned for Kronos by IRCAM and Betty Freeman, and recorded by Kronos for Nonesuch Records.

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, 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 the so-called “minimal” school.

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, expressly at David Harrington's request, 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. Kronos' long relationship with Riley has produced over 25 new works.

Good Medicine is the last section of *Salome Dances for Peace*, an epic, two-hour-long string quartet. About *Salome* Riley has said:

"The idea for *Salome Dances for Peace* came out of an improvisation theme from *The Harp of New Albion*. I realized this was potentially a whole new piece. Around that time, David Harrington called me and asked me to write another string quartet.

"I thought that it should be a ballet about Salome using her alluring powers to actually create peace in the world. So Salome in this case becomes like a goddess who—drawn out of antiquity, having done evil kinds of deeds—reincarnates and is trained as a sorceress, as a shaman. And through her dancing, she is able to become both a warrior and an influence on the world leaders' actions.

"I'm always trying to find ways that I can, besides doing music, to contribute to world peace, or maybe neighborhood peace or home peace. I told David that when we first started that I thought we ought to create a piece that can be played at the United Nations on special holidays. It would not be just a concert piece but a piece that could be played as a rite."

Flow (2010)

Laurie Anderson (b. 1947); arranged by **Jacob Garchik** (b. 1976)

The arrangement of Flow was commissioned for Kronos by the David Harrington Research and Development Fund.

Laurie Anderson is one of America's most renowned—and daring—creative pioneers. Her work, which encompasses music, visual art, poetry, film, and photography, has challenged and delighted audiences around the world for more than 30 years. Anderson is best known for her multimedia presentations and musical recordings. Anderson's first album, *O Superman*, launched her recording career in 1980, rising to number two on the British pop charts and subsequently appearing on her landmark release *Big Science*. She went on to record six more albums with Warner Brothers. In 2001, Anderson recorded her first album with Nonesuch Records, the critically lauded *Life on a String* followed by *Homeland* in 2010. (The original version of *Flow* is the final track on her 2010 Nonesuch album *Homeland*, and was nominated for a Grammy for Best Pop Instrumental.) Recent multimedia productions include *Delusion* (2010) and *Dirtday* (2011), the third in a cycle that also included the works *Happiness* (2001) and *The End of the Moon* (2004). Anderson collaborated with the Kronos Quartet on the 2013 work *Landfall*. Anderson's visual and installation work has been presented since 1980 in major museums throughout the world. In addition she has directed several films and recorded many works for film and dance.

Groung (c. 1912)

Komitas (1869–1935); arranged by **Mary Kouyoumdjian** (b. 1983)

The arrangement of Groung was written for the Kronos Quartet.

The nineteenth-century poem titled “Groung” (Crane) by Hovhanness 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 Beatitudes (1998)

Vladimir Martynov (b. 1946)

The Beatitudes was rescored for Kronos in 2006. Kronos’ recording appears on the Nonesuch release Music of Vladimir Martynov, which includes several of the composer’s works commissioned for Kronos.

A native of Moscow, Vladimir Martynov graduated from the Moscow Music Academy with a dedication to composing minimalistic music. He organized and participated in avant garde music festivals and worked at the electronic studio of the Skryabin Museum. In the mid-1970s, Martynov made a radical move from the structural refinement of serial music to what he described as a “new innocence.” He said, “Pärt, Silvestrov, and I discovered the key at the same time, independently from each other.”

Martynov traveled northern and central Russia, northern Caucasus, Pamir, and Tadzhikistan searching for the “music of my people.” What he found triggered a completely new understanding of music for him. He began to look for manuscripts in libraries, with the intent to restore the tradition of the ancient Russian choir chant. He published several books on that subject and taught in the famous Orthodox monastery of Troitse-Serguiev.

Known as one of the leading composers of the latest Russian avant garde, Martynov’s musical works present a wholeness in which the traditions of East and West, the spiritual and the mundane, folk music and avant garde melt into a new synthesis.

About *The Beatitudes*, David Harrington writes:

“This is a re-scoring of a work for choir that I heard on a CD that Andrey Kotov, the conductor of the Sirin Choir in Moscow, gave each member of Kronos earlier this year. I went back to my hotel room and listened to the whole CD, which was typical Russian liturgical music, until the last track, which was this astonishing piece by Vladimir Martynov, who had already written two works

for Kronos. I had been looking for something sublime for *Awakening*, a concert program we put together as a musical meditation for the fifth anniversary of 9/11, and late that night in Moscow I knew that I had heard it. When I got back to San Francisco, I was in touch with Vladimir, who agreed to create a version of *The Beatitudes* for pre-recorded quartet and live quartet specifically for that performance. *The Beatitudes* are truly a rare moment of perfection.”

Recorded track performed by Kronos and produced by Kronos and Scott Fraser.

***Bombs of Beirut* (2013)**

Mary Kouyoumdjian (b. 1983)

Bombs of Beirut was commissioned for the Kronos Quartet as part of Kronos: Under 30 Project / #5 by Hancher at the University of Iowa, Syracuse University, the Board of Directors of the Kronos Performing Arts Association, and individual backers of the Kronos: Under 30 Project / #5 Kickstarter campaign. Additional support was provided by The William and Flora Hewlett Foundation and the Sally and Don Lucas Artists Residency Program at Montalvo Arts Center.

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

Kouyoumdjian is a composer 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 folk music, and background in experimental composition to progressively blend the old with the new.

Kouyoumdjian has received commissions from Carnegie Hall for *This Should Feel Like Home*, the American Composers Forum/JFund for *Dzov Yerku Koynov* [*Sea of Two Colors*], REDSHIFT, the Los Angeles New Music Ensemble, the Nouveau Classical Project, Friction Quartet, Experiments in Opera, and Ensemble Oktoplus. Of her recent Carnegie Hall premiere of *This Should Feel Like Home*, the *New York Times* called her “eloquently scripted sequence of vignettes” an “emotionally wracking” piece. In her work as a composer, orchestrator, and music editor for film, she has collaborated on a diverse array of motion pictures and most recently orchestrated on the soundtrack to *The Place Beyond the Pines* (Focus Features). Currently based in Brooklyn, New York, Kouyoumdjian also actively promotes the growth of new music in her native state of California.

Holding 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, she has studied contemporary composition with Chaya Czernowin, Steven Kazuo Takasugi, and Chinariy Ung; new music performance with Steven Schick; and modern jazz with Anthony Davis.

Kouyoumdjian is also a co-founder and the executive director of the New York-based contemporary music ensemble Hotel Elefant. For more information, visit marykouyoumdjian.com.

About *Bombs of Beirut*, Kouyoumdjian writes:

“Lebanon, once the refuge where my grandparents and great-grandparents sought safety from the Armenian Genocide, became the dangerous home my parents and brother were forced to abandon during the Lebanese Civil War (1975–1990). We often read stories and see images in the news about violent events in the Middle East, but we very rarely get to hear the perspective of an individual who lived through them. Inspired by loved ones who grew up during the Lebanese Civil War, it is my hope that *Bombs of Beirut* provides a sonic picture of what day-to-day life is like in a turbulent Middle East—not filtered through the news and media, but through the real words of real people.

“The prerecorded backing track includes interviews with family and friends who shared their various experiences living in a time of war; it also presents sound documentation of bombings and attacks on civilians tape-recorded on an apartment balcony between 1976–1978.”

Mary Kouyoumdjian offers her special thanks to the Kronos Quartet for making this piece a reality, to loved ones for sharing their lives and stories, and to Hagop T. Bazerkanian for sharing his home recordings of the Lebanese Civil War. She dedicates *Bombs of Beirut* to her family.

TEXT

I. Before the War

I always fantasize about Lebanon before the Civil War
And I think about my parents, how they grew up
And the pictures that I have from when they were kids and my grandmother's stories

I just wish that that could've continued on instead of having the Civil War
I just imagine what an amazing place Lebanon would be right now
It's just a completely different world than what it was destined to be

I was born in 1950 in Beirut
There was no war during that time
I remember my childhood having [a] very peaceful life
Before the war it was a very normal life
No matter which neighborhood or which part of Beirut you were [in]
You can visit to any area of Beirut
There was no such thing that you will be scared to go [to] certain areas
You were free to go anywhere anytime in the middle of the night
Parties, restaurants, or you go to a movie, after the movie, after midnight
You go to any restaurant to eat, you come home in the morning four o'clock
Sometimes you don't even come home four o'clock, you go for breakfast early morning
Then you come home
It's a little Paris of [the] Middle East, because all over from different Arab countries...
Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Qatar, Iraq, Egypt
No matter where you were in The Middle East

People used to come [in the] summertime to Lebanon
The life in Beirut
We were born there

I was born [on] July 18, 1962
What I remember of the War?
I was in a monastery
I was sent to a monastery because apparently I was a very good boy
To become a priest
But it wasn't the War; it was the prelude to the War
It was like three... four days they were fighting and whatnot
And the monastery was set up on the hills and
We were watching the gunfire actually going back from one side to the other
side
But that was the prelude to the war, and I think it started in '75
It really exploded
They were collecting everybody and anybody that could hold a gun
Little kids with weapons bigger and taller than their own heights
By the time the War was going to start, I was shipped to Cyprus with my other
two older brothers
So we were actually in Cyprus when the war erupted in Beirut
One of the good things that my father did was to ship us to Cyprus
Otherwise we would probably be in some group fighting and probably dead
by now

II. The War

I was born in 1979
I was born on June 8, 1983
I left Lebanon in 1994
We left Lebanon in 1990
At the time I was born, there was no war
I remember
I remember
I saw everything
I remember our neighbors, I remember our house,
Every room in the house, the backyard and the chickens
Growing up at war I think
When you're five, when you're six... you don't really know what's
going on
Because I was younger and my parents... they did a fantastic job
They kept us in a positive happy environment
I have a lot of good memories
I didn't feel any fear, or I didn't think I was in danger
It was kind of fun sometimes
We didn't have to go to school
I would think that that's our life
You're a kid

The main war started in '75, 1975
It was very, very strange coming from Cypress back to Beirut
Where they've had three... four years of war already
Civil War
Because when we planned our wedding, our date was in May and
We didn't expect that fighting would start then

We couldn't wait until daylight because that night was the darkest night
I mean I've never seen black that black
We had to postpone the wedding because the church...
It was in the same area where the fighting started
All the lights where off and everything
Apparently there was a ceasefire
But we couldn't sleep... me and my two older brothers
Because we could hear the gunfire and rockets zooming by
In '76 I had my first child: your brother
And during the pregnancy we had the same thing
On and off... the fighting
Luckily the hospital was right next to our area, so
Even while I was having the baby
The bombs were everywhere
They had to move my bed from one area to another
Of course there were other people to
But I after I had the baby, I had to go home
To feel safer, to be with my family
At that time we had never seen so much weapons and tanks and M-16s
As we moved deeper into the city going home
We realized what's been going on there
All the buildings destroyed
Then we started hearing stories about how they were killing people on the
street
People... they continued their normal lives, but
Any day, any small reason can start the fighting again
And that's what happened... on and off

When it really really got bad, we used to go down to the basement
Basically the whole building used to go down
Whenever there [are] bombs going on
Everybody with kids, older people
Everybody has to go down
Everybody's in the basement, so
The bomb came from the parking side through that open window
He is a tall guy and he was standing, keeping everybody quiet and calm
Kids they cry, and you know... it's a chaos
A bomb hit my building and my dad was injured
They know... the kids are scared, they cry
He was trying to calm everybody
A bomb hit my building and my dad was injured
And what happened is when the bomb came from that side
He was the only one that was standing on his feet
A bomb hit my building and my dad was injured
He actually lost his legs
So the bomb came from that opening and... right to his both legs
That's how he lost his both legs

You could see windows that had all these bullet holes around it and then
[these] big old holes next to it
And we were just sitting on our beds and watching the city and
Seeing bullets flying from one side to the other side
Some were green and some were red
We were like "Wow! This can't be war. This is like almost Christmas... fireworks
or something!"
But it wasn't

The most interesting part was that when we were going sleep actually
When they were firing their tanks and whatnot
You could hear the sound
But then, cause I guess cause it was so quiet or something
You could almost hear the rumbling of stones or buildings falling down
We knew that it couldn't be could
It couldn't have been good
The whole building was gonna come down cause the bombs are
so powerful
You can hear that it's coming close to you
The sound that it makes, the bomb, you know it's coming to
your side and
You get ready by closing your ears or covering your head
You know it's going to hit somewhere close to you
But for us, it was like just staying between walls in the house
A bomb goes off and the shockwave from this bomb just rushed
through me
And I opened my eyes, and I just see the room, swaying like a wave
almost
I can just see the air in the room, in waves, in and out
You know that it's going and it's going to hit and as soon as it hits
You can hear the sound like
Boom!
Very powerful
And the whistling sound and the loud explosion
I could hear it, for example, it's like
Hearing very loud thunderstorms
You see something black is just passing through
That's the memory I have of the bombs
If it's at night, you can feel the fire
The light coming out of the bomb

iii. After the War

It is home
Makes me happy
I have never been back to Beirut since I left
I think they have good life there
To stay there, for whatever reason, to protect their home
To not leaves their homes and have to live through this hell
These people lived through Civil War
You can see after the War lots of buildings
Half of it gone
It was very emotional because
You lived in those neighborhoods and
You go through those neighborhoods and
You remember your childhood
Your good days [that] you were there

Beyond Zero: 1914-1918

A new work for quartet with film

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

Beyond Zero: 1914-1918 was commissioned for Kronos by Cal Performances; National World War I Museum at Liberty Memorial and Harriman-Jewell Series, Kansas City, Missouri; and Hopkins Center, Dartmouth College. *Beyond Zero: 1914-1918* is supported in part by an award to the Kronos Performing Arts Association from the National Endowment for the Arts. Art Works. Additional funding for the project is provided by The MAP Fund, supported by the Doris Duke Charitable Foundation and the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation.

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

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

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

Vrebalov's string quartet *...hold me, neighbor, in this storm...* was written for and recorded by Kronos for the album *Floodplain*. Her string quartet *Pannonia Boundless*, also for Kronos, was published by Boosey & Hawkes as part of the Kronos Collection, and recorded for the album *Kronos Caravan*. For more information please see aleksandravrebalov.com.

About *Beyond Zero: 1914-1918*, Aleksandra Vrebalov writes:

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

"While working on *Beyond Zero: 1914-1918*, I was inspired by anti-war writings, music, and art created during and immediately after World War I, including, for example, the writings of Wilfred Owen and Siegfried Sassoon, the music of Satie and Debussy, and the Dada movement. The piece draws from their disillusionment about heroism and patriotism, summed up in Owen's line from *Dulce et Decorum*, that to die for one's country is the old lie.

“Throughout the piece, there are several documentary recordings from different wars—from the horrific “Loyalty Speech” of James Watson Gerard who served as a U.S. Ambassador to Germany until 1917, to military commands of Serbian and Bosnian troupes during the conflicts that led to the brutal falling apart of Yugoslavia in 1990s, to the chilling sound of air-raid sirens during the bombing of London in World War II.

“My intention was to juxtapose these historical accounts of war with the finest expressions of spirit and creativity occurring at the same time—therefore Béla Bartók’s own playing of his *Piano Suite* written in 1916, and Huelsenbeck’s reading of his *Chorus Sanctus*, also written in 1916. A girl calling her cats is a symbolic reminder of suffering of women and children, and of longing for lost safety and domesticity. *Beyond Zero: 1914–1918* ends with fragments of a dark Byzantine hymn ‘Eternal Memory to the Virtuous,’ chanted by the monks from the Kovilj monastery in Serbia, in remembrance to all who lost their lives in the Great War and every war since then.”

.....

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

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

In 2013, Morrison was honored with retrospective programs in four different countries: the Walker Art Museum, Minneapolis; the Vila Do Conde Short Film Festival, Portugal; the Adelaide Film Festival, Australia; and the Aarhus Film Festival, Denmark. In 2014 Morrison had a mid-career retrospective at the Museum of Modern Art in New York. The same year, *The Great Flood* opened theatrically, and *The Miners’ Hymns* toured with live musical performances in the U.S. and U.K.

Morrison’s work is distributed by Icarus Films in North America, and the BFI in the U.K.

About *Beyond Zero: 1914–1918*, Bill Morrison writes:

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

“What we are left with is a glimpse of a war fought in fields, in trenches, and in the air. Most of the footage shows some emulsion deterioration—the by-product of a history stored on an unstable base for 100 years. Through a veil of physical degradation and original film dyes, we see training exercises, parades, and troop movement. Some of the battle footage was re-enacted for the camera, and some depicts actual live rounds. All of it was shot on film at the time of the conflict.

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

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

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Untitled Pulp Print on Combat Paper by Drew Cameron

In the lobby tonight: See related work by Drew Cameron

Drew Cameron, director of the Combat Paper Project, has been in residence at the University of Iowa February 2-6. He is a collaborator on the Kronos Quartet's *Beyond Zero* project.

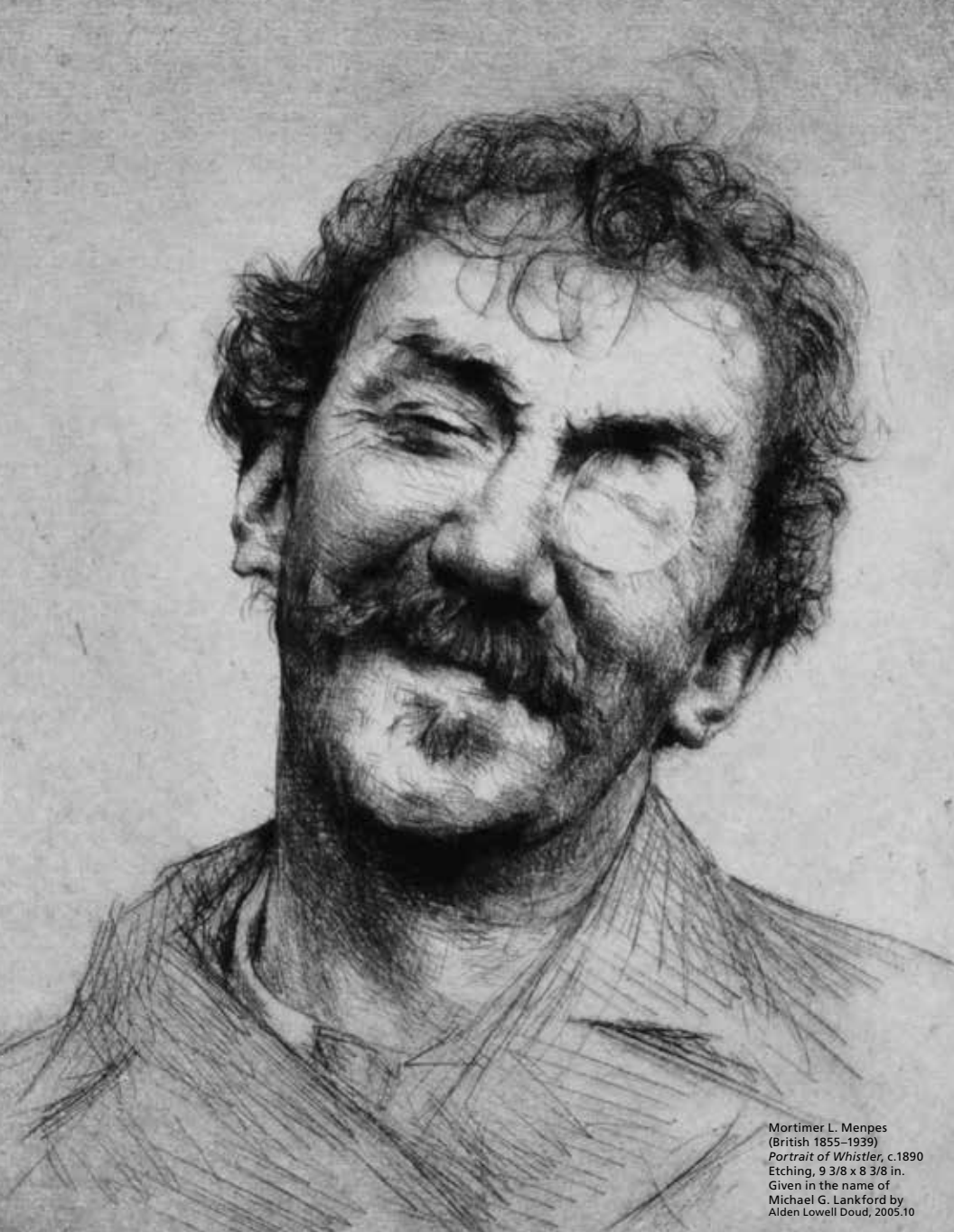
A native of Iowa City, Cameron is a hand papermaker, printer, and book artist based in San Francisco. He served in the US Army from 2000-06.

The Combat Paper Project was started as a way to help veterans and communities heal after war. The project is best known for holding workshops for veterans to take their uniforms and turn them in to paper. This process often helps veterans reclaim and transform their uniforms into works of art; these workshops are a healing experience for many veterans, families, and communities.

Artist's Notes on Pulp Prints on Combat Paper

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

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



Mortimer L. Menpes
(British 1855–1939)
Portrait of Whistler, c.1890
Etching, 9 3/8 x 8 3/8 in.
Given in the name of
Michael G. Lankford by
Alden Lowell Doud, 2005.10

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