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Kronos Quartet
Saturday, April 8, 1995—8:00 p.m.

David Harrington ……… violin
John Sherba ………….. violin
Hank Dutt ……………… viola
Jean Jeanrenaud ……… cello

Program

BRENT MICHAEL DAVIDS
TUNIPAO NENANGPE (TURTLE PEOPLE)*
special guest, Brent Michael Davids

TERRY RILEY
GOOD MEDICINE
from SALOME DANCES FOR PEACE*

ELLIOTT CARTER
FRAGMENT*

LOUIS HAININ (MOONDOG)
SYNCHRONY*
Allegro
Andante
Allegro

HARRY PARTCH
BARSTOW: EIGHT HITCHHIKERS’ INSCRIPTIONS
(arr. BEN JOHNSTON)
FROM A HIGHWAY RAILING AT BARSTOW, CALIFORNIA+
special guest, Ben Johnston

Intermission

KEN BENSHOOF
SONG OF TWENTY SHADOWS*

JOHN ADAMS
JOHN’S BOOK OF ALLEGED DANCES*
Hammer & Chisel
Bag the Bone
Toot Nipple
Dogarm
Alligator Escalator
Stebble Crotch
Judah to Ocean
Sichedren: The Little Serenade

Program Subject to Change

*Written for Kronos
+Arranged for Kronos

This program is supported by the National Endowment for the Arts.

There will be a discussion in the auditorium with the musicians, Ben Johnston, and Brent Michael Davids immediately following the concert.

Cover photograph by Michael Neier
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Cover photograph by Michael Knier
American Eagle and American Airlines are proud sponsors of the arts in communities all across the country. Because at American, we too understand the importance of lifting up the human spirit and giving it a chance to soar.

Sometimes, All You Need is a Lift.

kronos quartet

Since its inception in 1973, the Kronos Quartet has emerged as a leading voice for new work. Combining a unique musical vision with a fearless dedication to experimentation, Kronos has assembled a body of work unparalleled in its range and scope of expression, and in the process, has captured the attention of audiences worldwide.

The quartet's extensive repertoire ranges from Shostakovich, Webern, Bartok, and Ives to Anton Piazzolla, John Cage, Raymond Scott, and Howlin' Wolf. In addition to working closely with modern masters such as Terry Riley, John Zorn, and Henryk Gorecki, Kronos commissions new works from today's most innovative composers from around the world, extending its reach as far as Zimbabwe, Poland, Australia, Japan, Argentina, and Azerbaijan. The quartet is currently working with many composers including Franghiz Ali-Zadeh, Feidy Murza Suo, Scott Johnson, Sofia Gubaidulina, Steven Mackey, John Oswald, Don Byron, Tari Durr, Peter Schickele, Los V Verk, Philip Glass, and Dmitri Yanov-Yanovsky.

Kronos performs annually in many cities including San Francisco, Los Angeles, and New York, and tours extensively with more than 100 concerts each year in concert halls, clubs, and jazz festivals throughout the United States, Canada, Europe, Japan, Mexico, South America, New Zealand, Hong Kong, and Australia. Recent tours have included appearances at the Concertgebouw in Amsterdam, Kennedy Center, Montreux Jazz Festival, Carnegie Hall, Sydney Opera House, Tanglewood, London's Royal Festival Hall, La Scala, Theatre de la Ville in Paris, and Chicago's Orchestra Hall.

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American Eagle

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Tonight’s Program

Tanpao Nenanggo (Turtle People) [1994]
Brent Michael Davids (p. 1960)

Brent Michael Davids, a Mohican from Wisconsin who currently lives in Arizona, composes and performs his original music on a variety of acoustic, electronic, and Native instruments, including handmade crystal and soapstone bass flutes. Davids, raised in the Chicago area, began to study piano at the age of six and to compose at the age of 16. He studied composition at Northern Illinois University. In 1990 Davids was one of three composers from the United States selected to attend the prestigious International Music Festival of the 13th Century in 1992, under the tutelage of Chinary Ung, Davids completed his master of music degree at Arizona State University. Other honors include the 1992 Music Composition Fellowship Award from the Arizona Commission on the Arts, as well as awards from Meet the Composer, ASCAP, the Casio Company, H & R of West Germany, and Arizona State University.

Of Tanpao Nenanggo, Davids writes: “Tanpao Nenanggo features a specially built ‘turtle water drum’, a newly designed ‘owl flute’, as well as a ‘star crystal’ and the Kronos Quartet. Performed entirely in the Mohican language, Tanpao Nenanggo makes use of the words and images of the Mohican creation story.

“Once, as the story flows, the Earth was water below and the sky was water above. A white owl woman decided to fly down through a whole in the sky. She flew down to the water below, tested the stability of the water with her foot and became imprisoned as a result. A turtle under the water looked up at the bird woman and saw she had no place to stand. The turtle floated as a ‘bubble’ on the surface and offered her its back. Grateful for a place to rest, the woman gave the turtle the power to grow. The turtle was thankful for the gift and grew larger and larger until it became the land we call ‘turtle island.’”

Wutai Island. The white owl gave birth to the trees as she sang. Willow Trees, with my wind you are born!

Fine Trees, with my wind you are born! Apple Trees, with my wind you are born! All the Woods, with my wind you are born! As she flew, the bird woman covered the land with all kinds of trees! Watching the astounding spectacle, the other turtle people living in the water rose up onto the land to become the Mohicans or the People of the Ever Moving Waters.”

Tanpao Nenanggo was commissioned for Kronos by the Meet the Composer/Reader’s Digest Composition Program in partnership with the NEA and the Lila Wallace-Reader’s Digest Fund, in cooperation with Hancher Auditorium/University of Iowa and the Brooklyn Academy of Music.

“Good Medicine”
from Solano Dances for Peace (1985-86)
Terry Riley (b. 1935)

“The idea for Solano Dances for Peace came out of 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 Solano using her alluring powers to actually create peace in the world. So Solano in this case becomes like a goddess – a muse – drawn out of antiquity, having done evil deeds – reincarnates and is trained as a savior, as a shaman. And through her dancing, she is able to become both a warrior and an influence on the world leaders’ actions.

What I do is to make many, many minute sketches of ideas and file them away, and at some point as I’m writing, one of those ideas will be the right one for the time. I trust the fact that anything that occurs to me is related to whatever occurred to me before.

“All of the kinds of music that appear in my string quartets are the kinds of music that I personally love, and I don’t necessarily keep them in separate cabinets. One of the challenges, in fact, is to bring things you love together to live harmoniously. It also creates an understanding of how the notes work. These styles all have their particular flavors and expressions but they can be united. Notes all work under certain universal laws, they obey laws just like everything else in the universe does.

“to me it’s all a unified field. It’s the general search we’re going through now in physics, trying to find a unified theory. I think for a musician that is also relevant and works towards evolving new, deeper and richer musical traditions.

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Terry Riley, from a conversation with Mark Sved

Solano Dances for Peace is music of passing landscapes. It is a tapestry of seemingly unrelated music; music reflecting its composer’s passions for jazz, blues, North Indian ragas. Middle Eastern art music; styles never before found together within the framework of a single string quartet. Unlike any quartet ever written, Solano Dances for Peace, is long, triple the length of Beethoven’s longest quartet. And it is a narrative epic, grander in scope than the medium – traditionally favored for its intimacy – has previously known.

Terry Riley, who studied composition at the University of California at Berkeley, first came to prominence in 1964 when he found a way to subtler the work of tightly organized atonal composition then in academic fashion. With the groundbreaking in C – a work built upon steady pulse throughout, short, simple repeated melodic motifs, and static harmonies – Riley achieved an elegant and non-nostalgic return to tonality in art music. He demonstrated the hypnotic allure of making complex musical patterns out of basic means. And in so doing, he produced the seminal work of the new popular Minimal school.

Born in 1935 in the Sierra Nevada mountains of Northern California, where he still lives and composes amidst surroundings of striking natural beauty and spectacular night skies, Riley developed pattern music in response to his love for such natural design. But his facility for complex pattern making also proved the product of his virtuosity as a keyboard improviser. Riley quit formal composition altogether following in C in order to concentrate on improvisation, and in the late ’60s and early 70s, he built a reputation for weaving dazzlingly intricate skeins of music during all-night improvisations on organ and synthesizer. Also in the early 70s, Riley began to devote himself to the study of North Indian vocal techniques under the guidance of the legendary Pandit Pran Nath, and a new element gradually entered his music: long-limbed melody. From his work in Indian music, moreover, he also developed an interest in the subtle distinctions of tuning that would be hard to achieve with a traditional classical ensemble.

Riley played electric guitar again in 1979 when both he and the Kronos Quartet were on the faculty at Mills College in Oakland. By collaborating extensively with Kronos, with whom he soon developed a close relationship, Riley began to discover the degree to which 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 began to consider the string quartet in a general, and the Kronos Quartet in particular, as the ideal medium for his evolving musical language. And that meant approaching the string quartet in an entirely new way.

Riley’s first quartets were inspired by his keyboard improvisations, but his knowledge of string quartets became more sophisticated through his work with Kronos, and as Kronos became more comfortable with the breadth of Riley’s musical world, he was able to combine rigorous compositional ideas with his more performance-oriented approach to music making. But Riley’s quartets were also examples of his devotion to music as a spiritual endeavor. A gentle and wise man, Riley has an otherworldly presence. Storytelling is among his gifts, and like his music, Riley’s stories are cross-cultural.

Solano Dances for Peace is one of those stories told in a mythical setting by a string quartet. Riley began it in 1985 as a ballet, developing scenario and music together. As the score evolved during two years of complex composition, the music grew out its need for explicit staging. Describing mankind’s universal quest for inner knowledge, Riley included aspects from ancient myth, biblical legend and from Native American culture to portray a hero’s attainment of special powers in order to fight the forces of evil and discover truth.

In Riley’s narrative, the heroine is Solano, the legendary seductress in King Herod’s court who called for the head of John the Baptist to be brought to her on a plate in return for removing her seven veils during a deaf dance. Now, 2000 years after Solano’s famous dance, peace has been stolen from the earth by dark forces, and Solano is chosen to win it back. In “Anthem of the Great Spirit,” the first part of Solano Dances for Peace, Solano is summoned to the Great Spirit, who sees in her the embodiment of the feminine force. Throughout this first section of the score, she is guided by sages in a “Peace Dance,” she receives the gift of innocence in “Fanfare in the Minimal Kingdom,” she develops the discipline to thwart Wild Talker, who represents sexual temptation, and she is initiated as a warrior by the shaman Half Wolf during “More Ceremonial Races.” In order to fulfill her mission, Solano and Half Wolf descend into the gloomy underworld, as Jonah had entered the belly of the whale or Osipov was ferried into Hades. “Companions of the War Dreams,” which is the quartet’s large development section, a battle is fought, peace is recaptured, and the entire underworld, all its fantastic beings, is levitated into the Realm of Light.

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Dealers and Restorers of Fine String Instruments
Tonight's Program

Tanpao Nenangae (Turtle People) (1994)
Brent Michael Davis (b. 1960)

Brent Michael Davis, a Mohican from Wisconsin who currently lives in Arizona, composes and performs his original music on a variety of acoustic, electronic, and Native instruments, including handmade crystal soprano and crystal bass flutes. Davis, raised in the Chicago area, began to study piano at the age of eight and to compose at the age of 16. He studied composition at Northern Illinois University. In 1990 Davis was one of three composers from the United States selected to attend the prestigious International Music Festival in Rome and, in 1992, under the tutelage of Chinary Ung, Davis completed his master's degree at Arizona State University. Other honors include the 1992 Music Composition Fellowship Award from the Arizona Commission on the Arts, as well as awards from Meet the Composer, ASCAP, the Casio Company, H & R of West Germany, and Arizona State University.

Of Tanpao Nenangae, Davis writes: “Tanpao Nenangae features a specially built ‘turtle water drum’, a newly designed ‘owl flute’, a new crystal and onyx crystal, and the Kronos Quartet. Performed entirely in the Mohican language, Tanpao Nenangae makes use of the words and images of the Mohican creation story.

“Once, as the story flows, the Earth was water ‘below’ and the sky was water ‘above’. A white owl woman decided to fly down through a whole in the sky. She flew down to the water below, tested the stability of the water with her foot and became imprecated as a result. A turtle under the water looked up at the bird woman and saw she had no place to stand. The turtle floated as a ‘bubble’ on the surface and offered her its back. Grateful for a place to rest, the woman gave the turtle the power to grow. The turtle was thankful for the gift and grew larger and larger until it became the land we call ‘Turtle Island’. Here, the sun and the moon and the white owl gave birth to the trees as she sang. Willow Trees, with my wind you are born!

Fine Trees, with my wind you are born! Apple Trees, with my wind you are born! All the Woods, with my wind you are born! As she flew, the bird woman covered the land with all kinds of trees! Watching the astounding spectacle, the other turtle people living in the water rose up onto the land to become the Mohicans or the People of the Ever-Moving Waters.”

Tanpao Nenangae was commissioned for Kronos by the Meet the Composer/Reader’s Digest Commissioning Program in partnership with the NEA and the Lila Wallace-Reader’s Digest Fund, in cooperation with Huronia Auditorium/University of Iowa and the Brooklyn Academy of Music.

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Terry Riley, in a conversation with Mark Swed

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Dealers and Restorers of Fine String Instruments
Once more a dancer, Salome entertains around the world. In "The Gift," we find her in Tibet, and as the music becomes more folklike, Mongolia. Once again she is charged with a mission: to attract the attention of the world's two most powerful leaders. Seducing both the Bear Father and the Great White Father, which leads to the latter's emotional breakdown and finally to epiphany in "The Ecstasy." Salome succeeds in winning world peace. The score ends with the "Good Medicine Dance," a return to old wisdom and teachings, with the counsel to become guiltless, and to pursue self-knowledge.

The relationship between the story and the quartet is a complex one. The music does not consistently tell the story as program music. Certain motives are representative -- as, for instance, the stately toils and held notes for the Great Spirit at the opening -- but they are developed for musical, not programmatic, reasons. Characters can also be defined by more general musical means. A variety of somber melodic shapes represents Salome (first heard right after the opening triplets, as Salome makes her initial appearance), and slightly gismand give Wild-Talker a sort of Sportin' Life sleaziness (especially in his appearance in the "Seduction of the Bear Father" section of "The Ecstasy").

There are many striking moments of musical description, such as the eerie, howling harmonics that seem to pierce the ear, aptly conveying the otherworldly Mongolian winds. Static chords at the beginning of Salome's descent to the Underworld conjure up a surreal landscape, but the ensuing combat and victory are portrayed in a more abstract way in order to convey a sense a great doing rather than realistic actions or scenes.

How much one wants to hear Salome Danses for Peace as a specific story, it is ultimately a personal decision for the listener. Like a late Beethoven quartet, Salome Danses for Peace is a spiritual journey.

Mark Szed

Salome Danses for Peace was commissioned for Kronos by the Pompidou Centre and Betty Freeman.

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Synphony (1995)

Louis Hardin (Moondog) (b 1916)

Composer Louis Hardin was born in Muskrat, Kansas in 1916. Having lost his sight at age 16, Hardin attended the Iowa School for the Blind, where he received his first musical training. He went on to study privately with Burrel Tuttle at the Memphis Conservatory of Music. In 1943, Hardin moved to New York and, having gained the friendship of the renowned conductor, Arthur Rodzinski, was admitted as the singular outsider to attend rehearsals of the New York Philharmonic. Hardin adopted the name "Moondog" in 1947 and spent the next three decades living on the streets of New York where he worked as a street musician (frequently playing instruments of his own invention and dressed in Viking regalia). Always a prolific composer, Moondog would type his compositions in Braille and then have them transcribed into conventional notation. His music, which became known for its unusual metric sense, intricate and rigorous canonic procedures and refined, evocative melodies, often uses street sounds and environmental lines in the overall composition. Moondog now lives in Germany. Of Synphony, Hardin writes: "Each of the three movements was written in a form I call nova, meaning nine-part double canon. The work can be played by as few as four or up to as many as nine players in six different stock arrangements. Synphony, like all of my music, is tonal. The piece was written in three days, one movement a day. The first and third movement are in A Minor, the second movement is in A Flat Major, the two keys forming a circle in common. The key change from A Minor to A Flat Major back to A Minor affords the work an unusual effect. The music has a slight jazz feel to it and was meant to be accompanied by a brass drum with soft felt mallet, though it can be played without percussion."

"I call my jazz Zajazz, jazz in two directions, like a Janus head showing two faces. One is looking backwards into the past, represented by classical techniques of composing and the other face turned towards the future, which is characterized by a new kind of combining old and new elements of music, like the European Canon combined with the Panin Indian tomtom beat, the allegro being their running beat and the Andante their walking beat."

Synphony was written for Kronos.
Once more a dancer, Salome entertains around the world. In "The Gift," we find her in Tibet, and as the music becomes more folklike, Mongolia. Once again she is charged with a mission: to attract the attention of the world's two most powerful leaders. Seducing both the Bear Father and the Great White Father, which leads to the latter's emotional breakdown and finally to epiphany in "The Ecstasy." Salome succeeds in winning world peace. The score ends with the "Good Medicine Dance," a return to old wisdom and teachings, with the counsel to become guiltless, and to pursue self-knowledge.

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Mark Sred

Salome Dances for Peace was commissioned for Kronos by the Pompidou Centre and Betty Freeman.
Harry Partch (1905-1974)
Arranged by Ben Johnston

Self-taught as a theorist, living on the margins of society, Partch was revered by many musical institutions, Harry Partch sought musical inspiration and materials outside the European classical tradition and came to be recognized as one of the most iconoclastic, idiosyncratic and genuinely American composers of the 20th century. His lifelong effort began in the 1920s — was to create a monophonic music that returned to what he believed was the primal, astatic, corporeal state that music had long since abandoned: a music arising from human speech and the natural acoustic musical intervals generated by sounding bodies.

Partch grew up hearing music from many cultures. Born in 1905 in Oakland, California, Partch’s childhood was spent in California, New Mexico, and Arizona. Along with his early introduction to the local Mexican culture, Partch’s experiences in the southeastern Arizona, Partch’s parents, former Presbyterian missionaries in China, shared with him Chinese folk songs and Sufi music.

In 1920 Partch briefly studied in the University of Southern California’s School of Music. After a couple of years, not feeling that he was learning from his teachers, Partch left USC and moved to San Francisco where he frequented Mandrane theaters. Giving up on his academic music training, Partch began to read more about music in public libraries and to compose without academic restrictions. Around 1923 Partch began building his own European concert music and its system of twelve-tone equal temperament. Partch’s rejection of the twelve-tone system and adoption of the principles of just intonation led him to use a scale with 43 tones to the octave, which in turn forced him to invent new musical instruments. Partch’s decisive break with European musical tradition came in 1930 when he burned 14 years worth of his own music.

Partch’s works from the 1930s and 1940s used his own instruments in small-scale, intimate bachelor settings and came in the form of Chinese poems, biblical verses, scenes and songs from Shakespeare, and American hobo texts. As he invented original percussion and string instruments, Partch turned in the 1950s and 1960s to large-scale theatrical and dramatic compositions that extended his concept of corporeality. Though Partch was met with enthusiasm from audiences and support from university faculty and students: during his various associations with academic institutions, music departments generally remained hostile and unsupportive. As such, Partch’s composing, writing, instrument building, and music promotion happened in conjunction with or relied upon sales of subscriptions for his record Indian Records, various temporary employments, transcription and the existence of friends and supporters.

Ben Johnston was born in Matin, Georgia in 1926 and attended the College of William and Mary in Richmond, Virginia. After Navy service in World War II, he received his degrees in music from Cincinnati Conservatory of Music. His self-professed ‘fascination with sound from a scientific point of view’ was manifested in accelerating interest in acoustics. After reading a book by Partch, Johnston stuck up a correspondence and eventually moved to California to study with him. Johnston worked with Partch for six months in 1950 and performed for Partch’s recordings. Through Partch, Johnston met Darius Milhaud at Mills College in Oakland and received a second masters degree there. Johnston went on to a position in the dance program at the University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign, and for five years he also acted as chairman of the university’s Festival of Contemporary Arts. While there, Johnston helped to obtain permission for some of Partch’s later productions at the university.

Barstow: Eight Hitchhiker’s Inscriptions from a Highway Railing at Barstow, California was composed in 1941 and became the opening section to Partch’s cycle of American pieces, The Wayward (1941-43). Johnston describes the power of this cycle of Partch’s music: ‘U.S. Highway was the first piece of Partch’s I heard and it’s still, in a way, the piece I value the most. That piece and Barstow date from the Depression, Partch’s “hobo days,” a period in which Partch was “on the rails.” In that way, these pieces are partially autobiographical and that’s why they have so much punch. They come from the guts.’

In his writings, Bitter Music, Partch described the source of the text of Barstow and its inspiration for the piece: ‘the singing is in pencil. It is one of the white highways running outside the Major Highway junction of Barstow, California. I am walking along the highway and sit down on the railing to rest. “I’ll not have stories there which I happen to have seen.” I see many hitchhiker’s writings. They are usually just names and addresses, but this — why, it’s music. It’s both weak and strong, like uneducated human expressions always are. It’s eloquent in what it fails to express in words. And it’s epic. Definitely, it is a music.’

This arrangement of Barstow: Eight Hitchhiker’s Incriptions from a Highway Railing at Barstow, California was commissioned for the Kronos Quartet by Hancher Auditorium/University of Iowa.

John’s Book of Alleged Dances (1994)
John Adams (b. 1947)
John Adams was born in Worcester, Massachusetts in 1947 and grew up in New England. After graduating from Harvard University in 1971, Adams moved to California where he taught and conducted for 10 years at the San Francisco Conservatory of Music. He has served as composer in residence with the San Francisco Symphony from 1978-85 and in 1988 was named creative chair at the St. Paul Chamber Orchestra, where he served as conductor and music advisor until 1990. Adams now divides his time between composing and conducting, having recently led the Cleveland Orchestra, Frankfurt Opera, London Sinfonietta, Los Angeles Philharmonic, Minnesota Orchestra, San Francisco Symphony, and Ensemble Moderne, among others. A prolific composer of orchestral music and the most frequently programmed living American composer, Adams’ most significant and widely discussed works are his operas Nixon in China (1987) and The Death of Klinghoffer (1991). Created in collaboration with poet-librettist Alice Goodman and director Peter Sellars, these works combine stories from recent history with the apparatus of grand opera. The recording of Nixon in China received the 1989 Grammy Award for Best Composition and the recording of The Death of Klinghoffer was named Best of the Year by The New York Times.

John’s Book of Alleged Dances, Adams writes: ‘John’s Book of Alleged Dances started out as an idea for symphonizer and string quartet, specifically the Kronos Quartet. However, since it was not practical for a group that tours as often as Kronos to take along a symphonizer player, I began to think of the possibilities of a rhythm track that could be controlled by a live performer during the playing of the piece. With the help of an imaginative engineer, Mark Gray, the concept eventually evolved to a small ensemble of rhythm loops played by a sampler. These loops are almost all made from prepared piano sounds. The “preparation” of the piano, made famous by John Cage in the 1940s, is accomplished by putting small objects such as screws, bolts, rubber erasers and weather stripping between the strings of a grand piano. The placement of these objects renders the normal sound of the piano into something more akin to a small percussion ensemble or even a pungy gamelan.’
Barstow. Eight Hitchhikers' Trips from a Highway Railing at Barstow, California (1941-1943).

Harry Partch (1905-1974) Arising by Ben Johnston

Self-taught as a theorist, living on the margins of society, recognized by most musical institutions, Harry Partch sought musical inspiration and materials outside the Euro-American system and became recognized as one of the most innovative, iconoclastic and genuinely American composers of the 20th century. His lifelong effort—begun in the 1920s—was to create a monophonic music that returned to what he believed was the primal, static, corporeal state that music had long ago abandoned: a music arising from human speech and the natural acoustic musical intervals generated by sounding bodies.

Partch grew up hearing music from many cultures. Born in 1905 in Oakland, California, Partch’s childhood was spent in California, New Mexico, and Arizona. Along with his early introduction to the local Navajo, Zuni, and Hopi Indian cultures, his interest in the southeastern Arizona, Partch’s parents, former Presbyterian missionaries in China, shared with him Chinese folk songs and folk music. He learned to play mandolin and musical instruments and by age 14, he was composing prolifically for piano.

In 1920 Partch briefly studied at the University of Southern California’s School of Music. After a couple of years, not feeling that he was learning from his teachers, Partch left USC and moved to San Francisco where he frequented Mandan’s theaters. Giving up on his music education, he taught music in high schools, Partch began to read more about music in public libraries and to compose without academic restrictions. Around 1923 Partch began to play in Indian concert music and its system of twelve-tone equal temperament. Partch’s rejection of the twelve-tone system and adoption of the principles of just intonation led him to use a scale with 43 tones to the octave, which in turn forced him to invent new musical instruments. Partch’s decisive break with European musical tradition came in 1930 when he burned 14 years worth of his own music.

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Definitely, it is music."

This arrangement of Barstow. Eight Hitchhikers’ Trips from a Highway Railing at Barstow, California was commissioned for the Kronos Quartet by Hancher Auditorium/University of Iowa.

(Sources: Benjamin Johnston's introduction to Bitter Music by Harry Partch)

Song of Twenty Shadows (1994) Kent Bernshoop (1933)

Ken Bernshoop, a composer and pianist, has lived in Hawaii since 1962. A Fulbright scholar in 1965, a Guggenheim fellow in 1976 and a resident composer for several seasons for the Old Globe Theatre in San Diego, he has been a regular performer at Seattle Repertory Theater. Bernshoop currently teaches composition at the University of Washington. Bernshoop’s relationship with Kronos extends back to the Kronos Quartet. However, since it was not practical for a group that tours as often as Kronos to take on a synthesizer player, I began to think of the possibilities of a rhythm track that could be controlled by a live performer during the playing of the piece. With the help of an imaginative engineer, Mark Grey, the concept eventually evolved to a small ensemble of rhythm loops played by a sampler. These loops are almost all made from prepared, piano sounds. The "preparation" of the piano, made famous by John Cage in the 1940s, is accomplished by putting small objects such as screws, bolts, rubber erasers and weather stripping between the strings of a grand piano. The placement of these objects renders the normal sound of the piano into something more akin to a small percussion ensemble or even a "gymnasium" piano.

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- STICKS, 30142 • CONDENSATION

- DARK, 30144 • BRIEFS, 30146
- SHOES, 30148 • TIGHTS, 30150

- SPECIALS FOR CLIMATIC CONDITIONS
- ADJUSTED TO FIT

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- STICKS, 30156 • CONDENSATION

- DARK, 30158 • BRIEFS, 30160
- SHOES, 30162 • TIGHTS, 30164

- SPECIALS FOR CLIMATIC CONDITIONS
- ADJUSTED TO FIT

- RUBBER, 30166 • ICE, 30168
- STICKS, 30170 • CONDENSATION

- DARK, 30172 • BRIEFS, 30174
- SHOES, 30176 • TIGHTS, 30178

- SPECIALS FOR CLIMATIC CONDITIONS
- ADJUSTED TO FIT

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- STICKS, 30184 • CONDENSATION

- DARK, 30186 • BRIEFS, 30188
- SHOES, 30190 • TIGHTS, 30192

- SPECIALS FOR CLIMATIC CONDITIONS
- ADJUSTED TO FIT

- RUBBER, 30194 • ICE, 30196
- STICKS, 30198 • CONDENSATION

- DARK, 30200 • BRIEFS, 30202
- SHOES, 30204 • TIGHTS, 30206

- SPECIALS FOR CLIMATIC CONDITIONS
- ADJUSTED TO FIT

- RUBBER, 30208 • ICE, 30210
- STICKS, 30212 • CONDENSATION

- DARK, 30214 • BRIEFS, 30216
- SHOES, 30218 • TIGHTS, 30220

- SPECIALS FOR CLIMATIC CONDITIONS
- ADJUSTED TO FIT

- RUBBER, 30222 • ICE, 30224
- STICKS, 30226 • CONDENSATION

- DARK, 30228 • BRIEFS, 30230
- SHOES, 30232 • TIGHTS, 30234

- SPECIALS FOR CLIMATIC CONDITIONS
- ADJUSTED TO FIT
Hammer is a sixtyish radical who used to play the clarinet. Chisel keeps his politics to himself. I can hear them arguing while pounding, drilling, routing, measuring. This short, violent bit of agitation (at a brisk tempo appropriate for a march up Telegraph Avenue to People’s Park) is dedicated to them.

"Rag the Bone: Flying trochees from the quartet bounce from a bungie card above the genial four-square clacking of the loop maker. A swinging scat-ting for four voices in parallel motion. "Can you do the hanky-panky? Can you do the hanky-panky?" (or make up your own trochees).

"Toot Nipple. Mrs. Nipple. You probably don’t remember her husband, Toot. When he was young he was a big fellow, quick and clever. a clean on the dance floor." (from Posts by E. Annie Proulx).

"Dogum. My E-Mail address. Here we have mail from Dogum to the first violinist: "Hoe-Down. Incoming hall of 16th notes in twisted hillbilly chromatics. Get help from violinist." Tailor made for David Harrington, fearless fiddler.

"Alligator Escalator. The long sluggish beast is ascending from the basement level of Macy’s all the way to the top of the Union Square store and then back down. Slow slithering scales, played fluidly and sul tasto, leave invisible tracks on the escalator, splitting the octave in strange reptilian ways. Mothers are terrified, children fascinated. The lady handing out perfume samples in the foyer has been ignored.


"Judah to Ocean: A piece of vehicular music, this one following the streetcar tracks down the Great Highway and the beach, where I used to rent a two-room cottage behind the Surf Theater and listen to the Ni Judah reach the end of the line and turn around.

"Standchen: A little serenade in three, but also in four. Which is it? The violins and viola set out in an interlocking hiccups of staccato figures while the cello pumps out a counterthym. The loops pluck and chip in tight collaboration with the pulse. An homage to those ecstatic Beethoven and Schubert finales in 12/8 time."

Kronos and John Adams would like to thank Kim Holland of Kurzweil Music Systems and Robert Clyne of Neilsen/Clyne for providing the Kurzweil K2000 sampler.

Kronos Quartet
David Harrington violin
John Sherba violin
Hank Dutt viola
Joan Jeanrenaud cello

Kronos Quartet
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I’ve been trying to learn enough Mohican to write the texts for my pieces. My performances allow people to actually hear the language. If I have a chance to help keep the tribe alive... that’s a big responsibility.

Composer and performer Brent Michael Davids is 35 years old. He holds bachelor’s and master’s degrees in music in composition from Northern Illinois University and Arizona State University, respectively, and he is one of the few classically-trained Native American composers working today. His varied work includes soundtracks, as well as music concerts and dance. The Joffrey Ballet commissioned Moon of the Falling Leaves (1992) was released on compact disc in June 1992. The Kronos Quartet has commissioned two works from Davids. The Singing Wood premiered in 1994. "This piece premiered at the Brooklyn Academy of Music on February 18, 1995. The scene includes a turtle water drum, one of several instruments Davids has constructed for use in his music. Among Davids’s awards are a 1994 NEA OperaCrest Musical Theater grant (for Vision in Stone, a musical theater dance event) and a 1990 Pacific Composer Conference Fellowship to the International Music Festival in Japan. He currently resides in Phoenix, Arizona.

Craig Smith: You have degrees in composition from two universites. Were you familiar with Native American music before going to college?
Brent Michael Davids: Not much. As far as my tribe goes, there are not many musical examples left. There’s a big push now by the younger generation to go back and do a lot of research—people my age and younger are creating libraries and talking to people. We’re starting to reclaim what’s been ours and scattered to the winds.

Learning to read and write music isn’t common in Native America culture...

I feel that I’m kind of unique—I read and write music. I’m probably one of the few tribal members that does. Written language is pretty non-indigenous for the most part. It’s the same with written music, it’s not really traditional. I’ve heard people say, “It’s not a part of our traditions, our traditions are oral.” In one sense, I feel that’s true. But I think that it is almost like hiding. If Native Americans have the opportunity to learn to write and read another’s writing, we should take it.

Do you think that non-Native American critics can evaluate Indian art effectively?

I don’t think Native American art should be offlimits to non-Indian critics. But I also think that the criticism needs to be explained. What’s the criteria being used?

Some critics think they can take it at face value, “the piece should be able to stand on its own without program notes, without having to understand the culture.” That’s a cliche. There’s no way to evaluate a piece culturally without knowing about it, and what its intentions were. How could the critic know if the artist was successful at portraying the idea without understanding the culture? The best way to carry out that sort of discussion is to involve Native Americans themselves. It’s not that non-Natives can’t participate, but Native Americans should be involved as equals.

Learning to read and write music isn’t common in Native America culture... You have constructed quite a few instruments, from quartz flutes to orchestra bows and drums. Why?

When I first started writing music, it was strictly acoustic. Then I got interested in electronics and spent the next six or seven years in electronic studios. But it started to occur to me that live performance was where I’d rather be. So I started taking a closer look at some of the indigenous instruments and got the idea of actually altering those instruments.
The first one was in the early ’80s. I took the idea of a water drum, which is a cylinder with water in it and a skin stretched over the top. They’re generally pretty tiny, at most eight or nine inches in diameter. I searched for a different way to make the resonator vibrate, because with a water drum you hit the skin and it’s amplified through the bowl of water. I came across—in the thrift store—a refrigerator shelf. I found a 57 cent fondue pot that had a lot of resonance in it. I cut the refrigerator shelf in half, so that all the little cross bars were attached to one single bar, and cut those bars different lengths to create different pitches, then wrapped (t) around the fondue pot. You hit it, pluck it, strum it, bow it, and get these kinds of water-amplified sounds.

What’s first, Instrument or music?

It works both ways. Sometimes I have an idea for an instrument and make it and see what happens. Other times I have a composition and need a particular sound and have to make an instrument to make that sound. I like playing the crystal flutes. The audience can see my breath start to fill the flute, from one end to the other.

What about the turtle water drum for the Kronos commission?

It is based on a different style of water drum, more like southwestern water drumming. The fondue pot drum is more like Northeast woodlands. This is actually a pan of water. You float a half gourd on the water, then hit the top of the gourd. The air pocket underneath the gourd is amplified by the water. The reason I’m using that style of water drum is that it matches the idea of the composition, which is Turtle People—Tumpao Renangae in Mohican. It’s for string quartet, Mohican since—there’s a story being told in all the Mohican language—bell, a turtle whistle, banjo crystal flute, and an owl buzzer. The whole idea of the piece is to describe the Mohican creation story.

What is that?

It’s about a woman who comes down from the sky. In the beginning, there’s all water, water below and water above. And the sky opens up and the woman comes down to the water below. She looks for a place to stand, and puts her foot on the water, tasting the surface. She sinks a little bit, her foot goes in the water, and she becomes impregnated. But she doesn’t have a place to stand and is getting tired. A turtle under the water sees her and comes up and offers her his back as it floats on the water, so she can stand on the water. As a gift for the kindness, she gives the turtle the power to grow. It decides it’s going to use the power, and grows and grows until it becomes the continent, the land. The reference to Turtle Island is from that story.

Then the woman gives birth to the trees, which inhabit the land, and the water people underneath come up on land and become Mohicans. That part will be told in Mohican. I will do the narration. We were going to look for an elder to speak Mohican, but I wanted to have the narration actually composed into the score, and it would have to be performed by someone who reads music.

I’m building a huge water drum. A friend is bringing me a huge gourd from Africa, about two feet in diameter. My girlfriend Tracy and I were in a shopping mall and she saw these huge gumball machines and I said, that would do. I found the manufacturer and got the clear top of a gumball machine and turned it over with water inside. The gumball will float so the audience will see it, and I’ll paint it to look like the back of a turtle.

You and composer Dr. Louis Bollard are forming the Native American Music Association, aren’t you?

It’s a culmination of a lot of people being disaffected with the music scene. For me, it’s like having a little bit more power; it’s almost like having a union. I’m amazed at how much bad “Native American” music is being written—and not by Native Americans. They’re saying, this is American Indian composition, but it’s not. The tunes are not there, the inflections, the humor, the nuances are not there, the different aspects of Native American life. Works like that are a misuse of Native American culture as well as bad music.

I listened to a piece like that recently and I was frustrated and insulted on two levels. As a composer, because the music was badly crafted. But also because here was a non-Indian writing another Chief Seattle piece that should have been written by a Native American. Why commission something like that, when there are vibrant, living poets in our communities who could create powerful contemporary works?

I’ve talked to many conductors and orchestra managers about ideas for new pieces. But they’re just throwing money at these old ideas or very simplistic ideas that are not very innovative. Lately, there have been a lot of bad decisions, like having a Native American flute player perform a piece but having it commissioned from a non-Native composer. It’s still that stereotype that the only real Indian is the one of long ago. People will buy a blanket if it’s 200 years old but ignore the people who are doing that work today.

Craig A. Smith is a music critic and journalist based in Santa Fe. He holds a masters of music degree from the University of Missouri/ Kansas City. His publications include the Santa Fe New Mexican and Opera Canada, among others.

This conversation between Brent Michael Davids and Craig A. Smith originated in the premiere issue of Indian Artist, Spring 1995. Permission to reprint was granted.
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Do you think that non-Native American critics can evaluate Indian art effectively?

I don’t think Native American art should be off-limits to non-Indian critics. But I also think that the criticism needs to be explained. What’s the criteria being used?

Some critics think they can take it at face value, “the piece should be able to stand on its own without program notes, without having to understand the culture.” That’s a crock! There’s no way to evaluate a piece culturally without knowing about it, and what its intentions were. How could the critic know if the artist was successful at portraying the idea without understanding the culture?

The best way to carry out that sort of discussion is to involve Native Americans themselves. It’s not that non-Natives can’t participate, but Native Americans should be involved as equals.

You have constructed quite a few instruments, from quartz flutes to orchestra bows and drums. Why?

When I first started writing music, it was strictly acoustic. Then I got interested in electronics and spent the next six or seven years in electronic studios. But it started to occur to me that live performance was where I’d rather be. So I started taking a closer look at those of the indigenous instruments and got the idea of actually altering those instruments.

The first one was in the early ’80s. I took the idea of a water drum, which is a cylinder with water in it and a skin stretched over the top. They’re generally pretty tiny, at most eight or nine inches in diameter.

I searched for a different way to make the resonator vibrate, because with a water drum you hit the skin and it’s amplified through the bowl of water. I came across—in the thrift store—a refrigerator shelf. I found a 57 cent fondue pot that had a lot of resonance in it. I cut the refrigerator shelf in half, so that all the little cross bars were attached to one single bar, and cut those bars different lengths to create different pitches, then wrapped (t) around the fondue pot. You hit it, pluck it, strum it, play it, and get these kinds of watery amplified sounds.

What’s first, instrument or music?

It works both ways. Sometimes I have an idea for an instrument and make it and see what happens. Other times I have a composition and need a particular sound and have to make an instrument to make that sound. I like playing the crystal flutes. The audience can see my breath start to fill the flute, from one end to the other.

What about the turtle water drum for the Kronos commission?

It is based on a different style of water drum, more like Southwestern water drumming. The fondue pot drum is more like Northeast woodlands. This is actually a pan of water. You float a half pound on the water, then hit the top of the gourd. The air pocket underneath the gourd is amplified by the water. The reason I’m using that style of water drum is that it matches the idea of the composition, which is Turtle People—Pumpao Renangage in Mohican. It’s for string quartet, Mohican music—there’s a story being told all in the Mohican language—bells, a turtle whistle, bars crystal flute, and an owl buzzer. The whole idea of the piece is to describe the Mohican creation story.

What is that?

It’s about a woman who comes down from the sky. In the beginning, there’s all water, water below and water above. And the sky opens up and the woman comes down to the water below. She looks for a place to stand, and puts her foot on the water, testing the surface. She sinks a little bit, her foot goes in the water, and she becomes imprisoned. But she doesn’t have a place to stand and is getting tired.

A turtle under the water sees her and comes up and offers her its back as it floats on the water, so she can stand on the water. As a gift for the kindness, she gives the turtle the power to grow. It decides it’s going to use the power, and grows and grows until it becomes the continent, the land. The reference to Turtle Island is from that story.

Then the woman gives birth to the trees, which inhabit the land, and the water people underneath come up on the land and become Mohicans. That part will be told in Mohican. I will do the narration. We were going to look for an elder to speak Mohican, but I wanted to have the narration actually composed into the score, and it would have to be performed by someone who reads music. I’m building a huge water drum. A friend is bringing me a huge gourd from Africa, about two feet in diameter. My girlfriend Tracy and I were in a shopping mall and she saw these huge gumball machines and I said, that would do. I found the manufacturer and got the clear top of a gumball machine and turned it over with water inside. The gumball will float so the audience will see it, and I’ll paint it to look like the back of a turtle.

And you and composer Dr. Louis Bollard are forming the Native American Music Association, aren’t you?

It’s a culmination of a lot of people being disillusioned with the music scene. For me, it’s like having a little bit more power; it’s almost like having a union. I’m amazed at how much bad “Native American” music is being written—and not by Native Americans. They’re saying, this is American Indian composition, but it’s not. The tunes are not there, the inflections, the humor, the nuances are not there, the different aspects of Native American life. Works like that are a misuse of Native American culture as well as bad music.

I listened to a piece like that recently and I was frustrated and insulted on two levels. As a composer, because the music was badly crafted. But also because here was a non-Indian writing another Chief Seattle piece that should have been written by a Native American. Why commission something like that, when there are vibrant, living poets in our communities who could create powerful contemporary works?

I’ve talked to many conductors and orchestra managers about ideas for new pieces. But they’re just throwing money at these old ideas or very simplistic ideas that are not very innovative. Lately, there have been a lot of bad decisions, like having a Native American flute player perform a piece but having it commissioned from a non-Native composer. It’s still that stereotype that the only real Indian is the one of long ago. People will buy a blanket if it’s 200 years old but ignore the people who are doing that work today.

Craig A. Smith is a music critic and journalist based in Santa Fe. He holds a masters of music degree from the University of Missouri/Kansas City. His publications include the Santa Fe New Mexican and Opera Canada, among others.

This conversation between Brent Michael Davids and Craig A. Smith originated in the premiere issue of Indian Artist, Spring 1995. Permission to reprint was granted.
Ben Johnston

Ben Johnston gets two average-length paragraphs in the New Grove Dictionary of American Music, roughly the same number of words for his closest alphabetical neighbors, two obscure nineteenth-century organ builders. That might lead one to suspect that the 69-year-old composer, who taught at the University of Illinois in Champaign from 1951 to 1986, is a minor, if respected, academic composer of limited interest, one of hundreds throughout the country. Such an impression could be furthered by the scant number of recordings that represent him in the Schwann catalogue, by his lack of representation from a major publisher, or by simply noting how seldom his music is programmed.

But Ben Johnston's American Grove entry does have two things that William Allen Johnson or Thomas Johnson couldn't possibly--a very interesting work list and some cross-references to essays on notation and tuning systems. Moreover the article happens to make the startling statement that Johnston, who studied with and is an important authority on Henry Parry, "is regarded as one of the foremost composers of microtonal music."

We don't need the "regarded" qualifier here. Ask anyone working with microtones (it is one of American music's little secrets then a respectable number of composers are). Better yet, ask anyone who has come in contact with Johnston's music, which has a tendency to make a vivid impression on audiences.

Several years ago, when the Kronos Quartet championed Johnston's fourth string quartet (an excerpting series of variations onAmazing Grace:), the piece was always the hit of its concerts, and Kronos has often cited it as one of their favorite pieces. (It is recorded on Kronos' Nonesuch CD, White Man Sleeps I.) I also remember, more recently, a concert of striking modern works for singer and chamber ensembles presented by the new music specialist, soprano Dea Ohrenstein, at the Dance Theater Workshop, a venue for experimental work in New York, at which there was hardly a dry eye in the house after the premiere of Johnston's Calamity Jane and Her Daughter.

Downtown audiences-especially a black-jacketed downtown audience which attends programs entitled "Urban Daze"-don't cry. Moreover, the text to Calamity Jane, adapted from letters purported to be written by Calamity Jane to her daughter, is considered boys. But it is Johnston's amazing accomplishment to set even her cake recipe in such a way as to make it touching. (The work is included on Ohrenstein's CD, Urban Daze.)

Johnston's large body of work, which includes nine string quartets, is not easy to categorize. He wrote 12 tone music in the '50s, as well as music that was clearly influenced by his three very different mentors--Henry Parry, Darius Milhaud, and John Cage. And while his music has long since stopped sounding like any one of them, all three have continued in some profound way to influence his work. From Milhaud, there comes an engaging directness of expression and economy of means; from Cage, a careful consideration of a composer's ability to control not only materials but compositional and performance situations and environments; from Parry, the new microtonal scales and a general sense of quirky. Johnston has also demonstrated that with three sources there is a kind of wonder in the essence of sound. Ultimately, what Johnston has done more than any other composer with roots in the great American musical experiments of the '50s and '60s, is to translate those radical approaches to the nature of music into a music that is immediately apprehensible. He is not without being avant-garde, as Kyle Gann has just put it in an essay that accompanies a winning CD of Johnston's chamber music, Ponder Noticing, recently released on New World Records.

But, having experimented in a wide variety of musical genres, including conceptual performance pieces and masterful microtonal music with rare general appeal, Johnston can also be said to be avant-garde without being radical. Indeed, Johnston is probably our most subtle composer, composer able to make both radical thinking and avant-garde techniques sound invariably gracious. He is our gentlest persuader.

That graciousness towards his audience may also, paradoxically, explain why Johnston is not a more prominent figure in the concert hall. He does not scream his concerns—which is the way radical cases and the avant-garde usually get heard. Microtonal composers have, in particular, become militant these days, proclaiming that using more subtle tonalities than the tempered system we are accustomed to is the only proper way to make music these days. (I lately saw one noted unconventional modernist wearing a button with a skull and cross bones on it, and the legend "Tune It or Die!") Microtonal music has come to be associated with aggression and strangeness.

Johnston's music is not strange, neither microtonal or not, as least not in that sense. Much of the deepest expression in Calamity Jane to Her Daughter—indeed what makes it so utterly moving—is the richness of emotion that can be derived from the purer tones. In Johnston's hands such tones make sounds seem more able to represent nuance of feeling. In fact, it may be that lack of strangeness, that ability to focus directly and without fuss on the essence of a musical utterance, that (also paradoxically) makes Johnston one of the strangest of American composers. He is a composer who digs very deep to find the obvious. He is, for instance, a Catholic who can discover the Zen in his own devotion. In Ponder Nothing: a haunting 1989 set of solo clarinet variations on the hymn Let All Mortal Flesh Keep Silence, Johnston has revealed the Zen no-mindness in its third line ("Ponder nothing earthly mind.") as can points out. Johnston is, of course, pondered much. Only the hardiest kind of pondering makes the "tilting/stretching and mind-stretching techniques of modern music sound so plain spoken. He has studied to find techniques of making microtonal music immediate and playable. He has experimented, and sometimes failed. But mostly he has succeeded, as an array of variety of chamber music, his vocal music (a model for the clarity of text setting) and his theatrical music all demonstrate. He is, I think, among our most authentic American voices, wise and easily loved. We only need to hear him, and to hear him far more often than we do, to recognize it.

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**Dea Ohrenstein performed excerpts of this work at Hancher Auditorium on April 26, 1990 with the St. Paul Chamber Orchestra conducted by John Adams.

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Johnston's large body of work, which includes nine string quartets, is not easy to categorize. He wrote 12 tone music in the '50s, as well as music that was clearly influenced by the intense three very different mentors—Harry Partch, Darius Milhaud, and John Cage. And while his music has long since stopped sounding like any one of them, all three have continued in some profound way to inform his work. From Milhaud, there comes an engaging directness of expression and economy of means; from Cage, a careful consideration of a composer's ability to control not only materials but compositional and performance situations and environments, from Partch, the new-microtonal scales and a general sense of quirkiness. Johnston has also demonstrated that all three sources share a kind of wonder in the essence of sound.

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Drummers of Burundi
Dancing, Jumping, Pounding with Ebullient Glee

Western pop bands, but each time "the real thing" comes along, it knocks the audience sideways. While the origins of the musical tradition are shrouded in ancient legend and mystery, this is a performance which remains a fresh and vital cultural statement. The exuberance and creative spirit of a whole nation is expressed through these drums and the rituals surrounding them.

In Burundi, drums are sacred objects, once reserved solely for ceremonial use. They have long proclamed important events—coronations, births, and funerals—and have celebrated the cycle of the seasons and the planting and harvesting of crops. Through their close links with agriculture, the drums have acquired a symbolic association with fertility. The skin is likened to the baby's cradle, the pegs to the mother's breasts, the body of the drum to the stomach, and so on.

Drums are also bound to royalty in Burundi—the sacred drums and the king both represent the powers of fertility and regeneration, guaranteeing the future and prosperity of the kingdom. The word "inguma" translates both as "drum" and "kingdom." Even today there remains an ancient network of "drum sanctuaries" which once served as the dwelling places of both drums and kings.

The musicians who will perform at Hanche learned their skills at an early age from their fathers and grandfathers. Their ancestors have always been drummers but, just as today, they were firm and foremost farmers since Burundi is essentially an agricultural nation. Today the performance of the drummers carries less of the ritual significance of the past, but many of the rhythms they play still relate to aspects of their existence, some to planting, harvesting and protection of the sorghum crop, some to familiar birds, and others in praise of the cow, considered sacred in Burundi.

Their Hanche performance will be made up of dozens of different rhythms, each representing an important concept to the people of Burundi. Sometimes the drums call them to appreciate important people—the chief drummer, the eldest drummer, or the most prestigious person present. Others relive in their traditions while still others encourage peace and mutual respect or unity.

Through the darkness, a low rumble intensifies from the back of the hall. Gradually a series of swaying figures snake down the aisles, huge drums made of hollowed tree trunks balanced on their heads, beating out an insistent rhythm. The sheer power of the drumming fills the auditorium.

"The Drummers of Burundi, a 14-man group, dispersed primal pounding—part of the group playing an unchanging pattern, part slamming out shifting accents—and joyful, leaping dances."

—New York Times

One by one, the musicians position their drums in a crescent. A large ceremonial drum, the ndorinya, provides the focal point to which drummers come leaping forward with gymnastic precision, and strike the drum on its skin with deep booming resonance or beat the side with a hand clacking. The thunderous sounds needs no amplification. The intensity and vitality of the performance is an emotional experience that few Western audiences have ever encountered.

As the chief drummer comes forward, he calls to the rest of the musicians who respond with cheers before the rhythm begins again. "Children who have sacrificed themselves to

tell their story to the Wolof people of Senegal. He started drumming at age eight and by 12 was performing at births, marriages, and deaths.

A master drummer, teacher, and performer, Mor Thiam was brought to the United States by dancer/chorographer Kathleen Dunham in 1966. Settling in St. Louis, he became interested in how the drum was used in jazz and came in contact with the Black Artists Group, a collective which included saxophonist Oliver Lake, trumpeter Lester Bowie, and drummer Philip Wilson. In the years since, he has performed with Alvin Ailey Dance Company, Nancy Wilson, and B.B. King, among many others. He has also formed Drum of Fire, a fusion of African music with jazz and funk.

In recent years, Hanche has circled the globe to bring the best and most representative examples of the world's percussion traditions—Samuel Nini from Korea, Kodo from Japan, Max Roach from the United States, String from Britain, and Les Ballets Africains from Senegal. Their performances and drumming differ significantly, but always there is a sense of visceral excitement that sets hearts pounding and even sternum bones vibrating. The Drummers of Burundi and Mor Thiam promise to do the same.

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Tickets are available at the Hancher Box Office.
Meredith Monk, one of America's most brilliant and unclassifiable theatrical artists, recently turned 50. As she put it, "The pain of aging is not only about accepting the limitations of age. It is also caused by a process of becoming more conscious."

Volcano Songs, which Ms. Monk will perform in the Hancher Loft on May 2 and 3, is the product of this passage. In less than one hour, Volcano Songs celebrates the mysteries of life, aging, death, rebirth, creation, and transformation. It is a solo work, but with just a few gestures and a range of vocal changes, Monk moves from childhood to old age and back to youth. At one moment she is a mother, at the next an aged woman; then a child and a wide-eyed young woman; the next a goddess. There are moments when she could be a cheerful Fagin of the 1920s doing the Charleston. Then she does enormous grins and raises her arms triumphantly. At another moment she seems to wade through an unseen swamp. Combined with succinct movements, her wordless singing reveals a wealth of complex characters and personalities in continual metamorphosis.

As in all of her work, Volcano Songs is poetic in substance and motivation. It is strongly intuitive, metaphoric, and revelatory in its nature, with its meaning emerging in layers from a succession of images rather than from a linear narrative. The moment it begins, one is transported through movement, gesture, music, slides, and video to a complete, consistent, imagined world, as strange, mysterious, and intriguing as the real one. Slowly characters are transformed and magical shifts occur in the environment.

The visual effects of the piece are quite stunning. Ms. Monk worked with Paul Krajnak, director of exhibit development at Milwaukee's Discovery World Museum, a children's interactive science museum. At one point she pulls a cloth off the front of what appear to be three black rectangles on the floor and it glows. Behind a hanging pane of glass, scrubbing at it, she looks cloudy, but flashes of light bring her magically into sharp focus for eyeballs at a time. But these are not simply special effects. Monk is interested in using such scientific or technological effects and space-age materials to describe or depict the metaphysical realm.

For almost 30 years, Meredith Monk has been at the forefront of an interdisciplinary approach to performance. A singer/composer/director/choreographer/filmmaker, she has been a seminal artist in synthesizing all the disciplines to discover new dimensions where movement meets ritual, music, theater, the voice, and film. She has been widely honored—with two Guggenheim Fellowships, a Brandeis Creative Arts Award, three Obies for theater, two Viliger Awards for composition, a "Bessie" for Sustained Creative Achievement, the National Music Theater Award in opera, 16 ASCAP Awards for Musical Composition, two German Critics Prize for best recording, a Rockefeller Fellowship for Distinguished Choreography, and First Prize for Performance Programming from the Corporation for Public Broadcasting. She has composed mega, opera-size creations and others more akin to chamber music. But no matter what the scale, her work has an austerity, transparency, exultation of effect, multiple evocations, and a haunting emotional resonance. As with the cycle of life, Ms. Monk calls Volcano Songs a "work-in-progress."

But according to Jack Anderson of the New York Times, "it is difficult to imagine how it could be bettered."

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As in all of her work, Volcano Songs is poetic in substance and motivation. It is strongly intuitive, metaphoric, and revelatory in its nature, with its meaning emerging in layers from a succession of images rather than from a linear narrative. The moment it begins, one is transported through movement, gesture, music, slides, and video to a complete, consistent, imagined world, as strange, mysterious, and intriguing as the real one. Slowly characters are transformed and magical shifts occur in the environment.

The visual effects of the piece are quite stunning. Ms. Monk worked with Paul Krajnik, director of exhibit development at Milwaukee’s Discovery World Museum, a children’s interactive science museum. At one point she pulls a cloth off the front of what appear to be three black rectangles on the floor and it glows. Behind a hanging pane of glass, scrabbling at it, she looks cloudy, but flashes of light bring her magically into sharp focus for eyeballs at a time. But these are not simply special effects. Monk is interested in using such scientific or technological effects and space-age materials to describe or depict the metaphorical realm.

For almost 30 years, Meredith Monk has been at the forefront of an interdisciplinary approach to performance. A singer/composer/director/choreographer/filmmaker, she has been a seminal artist in synthesizing all the disciplines to discover new dimensions where movement meets ritual, music, theater, the voice, and film. She has been widely honored—with two Guggenheim Fellowships, a Brandeis Creative Arts Award, three Obies for theater, two Village Awards for composition, a “Bessie” for Sustained Creative Achievement, the National Music Theater Award in opera, 16 ASCAP Awards for Musical Composition, two German Critics Prizes for best recording, a Rockefeller Fellowship for Distinguished Choreography, and First Prize for Performance Programming from the Corporation for Public Broadcasting. She has composed mega, opera-size creations and others more akin to chamber music. But no matter what the scale, her works have an austerity, transparency, exactitude of effect, multiple evocations, and a haunting emotional resonance.

As with the cycle of life, Ms. Monk calls Volcano Songs a “work-in-progress.” But according to Jack Anderson of the New York Times, “it is difficult to imagine how it could be bettered.”

Tickets are available at the Hancher Box Office.

Hancher Guild: A Decade of Serving the Arts

Hancher Guild is a dynamic organization of people who donate their most valuable resources to Hancher, their time, enthusiasm, insight, and commitment. The volunteers of Hancher Guild provide many vital services to Hancher, they staff the Showcase gift shop, offer hospitality to visiting artists, help with the organization of activities for young audiences, assist in the season subscription campaign, advise the administration on programming and services, and act as goodwill ambassadors for Hancher and the performing arts.

While many Guild members are also Hancher Circle and Hancher Enrichment Fund contributors, no financial investment is required to become a Hancher Guild member. Nor is any specific time commitment necessary. Most members have full schedules and many interests. All the Guild asks is that its members do their best to honor the time they do commit. The Guild is able and eager to take responsibilities to its members’ specific skills and interests. And should you not live in the Iowa City area to be a Guild member, the Guild has a number of members in other Iowa communities. In addition to participating in the range of Guild activities, you can make a special contribution by helping the outreach and audience development in your own community.

Beyond the satisfaction of serving the arts, Hancher Guild members get to enjoy the unique inside look at the performing arts. Among the many new people they meet may be the artists who appear on the Hancher stage. While you serve the arts, you find your own appreciation of the performances—and the business of putting them on the stage—enriched.

For further information on the Hancher Guild, contact Linda Bywater at 319-4663 or Gayle Klouda at 338-8824.

Audio Odyssey
409 Kirkwood Ave. Iowa City 338-9505

Andersen Window Center

Nagle Number
338-1113
MUSEUM OF ART EXHIBITIONS

March 18-April 30
Michael Mazur: "The Interno"

March 18-May 14
Inscapes: Old Nordum

March 18-May 14
Another Song: Susan Bannor and John Cage

MUSIC, THEATER, AND DANCE

Wednesday, April 12
Stradivari Quartet
8 p.m., Chappell Hall

U.S. Symphony Band
7:30 p.m., Hancher Auditorium

Thursday, April 13
Loco Motives
8 p.m., Busse Theatre, Theatre Building

Friday, April 14
Drummers of Bunambi
8 p.m., Hancher Auditorium

Loco Motives
8 p.m., Busse Theatre, Theatre Building

Saturday, April 15
Composers Workshop
8 p.m., Chappell Hall
Loco Motives
8 p.m., Busse Theatre, Theatre Building

Sunday, April 16
Loco Motives
3 p.m., Busse Theatre, Theatre Building

Monday, April 17
Jazz Lab Band
8 p.m., Chappell Hall

Hancher Auditorium Information

Box Office: Open from 11:00 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. Monday through Friday, 11:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. Saturday, and 1:00 to 3:00 p.m. Sunday. On nights of performances, the Box Office remains open until 8:30 p.m. If a performance falls on a Saturday or Sunday, Box Office hours are 1:00 to 8:30 p.m. Telephone: 319/335-1160, or toll-free in Iowa 1-800-HANCHER.

Seating Policy: To avoid disrupting the performance, latecomers will be directed to the observation rooms and will be seated during an intermission or at the discretion of the management. If you must leave during a performance and later wish to return to the auditorium, an usher will escort you to an observation booth until an intermission or conclusion of the performance.

Greentree: The green room, located on the lower level of the lobby, is the site of discussions preceding many events and is also a convenient place to meet artists following a performance. Ask an usher, or check the lobby sign for availability of performers.

Coughing and Electronic Watchers:
The auditorium's acoustics amplify the sound of coughing and other noises. Please turn off your electronic watch alarm. The use of a handheld microphone will help muff a cough or sneeze, and cough drops are available from the ushers. If coughing persists, you may wish to return to the lobby, where an usher can direct you to one of the soundproof observation rooms.

Smoking: Smoking is not permitted anywhere in the auditorium, lobby, or Cafe. If you wish to smoke during intermissions, you may leave the building, but please take your ticket stub to re-enter the building.

Cameras and Tape Recorders: In compliance with copyright laws and contractual arrangements with artists, photographs and recordings may not be made during a performance. Please check your cameras and tape recorders with the house manager or an usher.

Restrooms and Drinking Fountains: Located on either side of the lobby and mezzanine.
MUSEUM OF ART EXHIBITIONS

March 18-April 30
Michael Muric: "The Interior"

March 18-May 14
Isopetasses: Old Nordum

March 18-May 14
Another Song: Susan Carson and John Cage

MUSIC, THEATER, AND DANCE

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U.S. Symphony Band
7:30 p.m., Hancher Auditorium

Thursday, April 13
Laco Motives
8 p.m., Mabee Theatre, Theatre Building

Friday, April 14
Drummers of Bunin
8 p.m., Hancher Auditorium

Saturday, April 15
Composers Workshop
8 p.m., Chapp Hall

Laco Motives
8 p.m., Mabee Theatre, Theatre Building

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