Kronos Quartet with Mahsa Vahdat
Saturday, September 14 at 8:00 p.m.
Schwartz Center for Performing Arts

Brad Mehldau, piano
and Ian Bostridge, tenor
October 18, 2019 at 8:00 p.m.

Joyce DiDonato
In War and Peace:
Harmony Through Music
November 3, 2019 at 7:00 p.m.

Royal Philharmonic Orchestra
with Khatia Buniatishvili, piano
January 15, 2020 at 8:00 p.m.

Pablo Sáinz Villegas
Americano Trio
February 29, 2020 at 8:00 p.m.

Jane Bunnett
and Maqueque
March 19, 2020 at 8:00 p.m.

Robert McDuffie, violin
and Robert Spano, piano
April 10, 2020 at 8:00 p.m.

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Music for Change: The Banned Countries
Kronos Quartet

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

with special guest Mahsa Vahdat

Brian H. Scott, lighting design
Scott Fraser, sound design

Saturday, September 14, 2019, 8:00 p.m.
Emerson Concert Hall
Schwartz Center for Performing Arts

This program is made possible by a generous gift from the late Flora Glenn Candler, a friend and patron of music at Emory University.

music.emory.edu
Kronos Quartet

Mugam Sayagi *
Franghiz Ali-Zadeh
(b. 1947)

Zaghlala **
(Blurred vision caused by strong light hitting the eyes)
Islam Chipsy
(b. 1985)
arr. Jacob Garchik

Wa Habibi +
(Beloved)
traditional
arr. Stephen Prutsman

Tashweesh *
Ramallah Underground
arr. Jacob Garchik

Ya Mun Dakhal Bahr Al-Hawa +
(Hey, Who Enters The Sea of Passion?)
Fatimah Al-Zaelaeyah
arr. Jacob Garchik

La Sidounak Sayyada +
(I’ll Prevent the Hunters from Hunting You)
Omar Souleyman
(b. 1966)
arr. Jacob Garchik

traditional

Bia Ke Berem Ba Mazar +

Dur-Dur Band
arr. Jacob Garchik

Dooyo +


Escalay *
(Water Wheel)
Hamza El Din
(1929–2006)
realized by Tohru Ueda
Kronos Quartet with Mahsa Vahdat

The Sun Rises +
   The Sun Rises
   Vanishing Lines
   My Ruthless Companion

Songs +
   Leyli’s Nightingales
   I Was Dead

with Mahsa Vahdat, vocals

Performed without pause

PROGRAM SUBJECT TO CHANGE

For legal reasons and physical safety of the artists and for the comfort of the audience, cameras and other recording devices are not permitted in the concert hall during the performance.

Interstitial music: Bass lines by Mamadou Kouyaté *
Sound collages by David Harrington, Joel Tarman, and Nikolás McConnie-Saad *

* Written for Kronos
** Composed for 50 for the Future: The Kronos Learning Repertoire
   + Arranged for Kronos
**Program Notes**

**Music for Change: The Banned Countries**

Kronos Quartet has always looked to music as a model for how to move through the world. A creative and cohesive force that doesn’t heed or recognize borders, music provides an irrefutable response to those seeking to divide and demonize peoples. *Music for Change: The Banned Countries* came about in direct response to the 2017 Executive Orders severely restricting access to the United States, a policy that targeted citizens from seven Muslim-majority nations, many of which are represented in this program. From its inception some 45 years ago as a vehicle for George Crumb’s epochal anti-war cri-de-coeur *Black Angels*, through extraordinary works like Steve Reich’s haunted *Different Trains* and the excavation of Cold War anxiety on the album *Howl, USA*, Kronos has embraced the imperative that music must illuminate the present moment. *The Banned Countries* builds on that legacy. Drawn from throughout the far-flung Muslim world, the concert features newly commissioned arrangements, such as *Dooyo* by Somalia’s Dur-Dur Band and *Ya Mun Dakhal Bahr Al-Hawa (Hey, Who Enters The Sea of Passion?)* by Yemen’s Fatimah Al-Zaelaeyah, as well as pieces gleaned from Kronos’s long-standing repertoire. *The Banned Countries* concerts often feature guest artists and tonight’s is the incandescent Iranian artist and vocalist Mahsa Vahdat, a regular part of the Kronos constellation since she settled in the San Francisco Bay Area.

—Program note by Andrew Gilbert

**Mugam Sayagi (1993)**

Franghiz Ali-Zadeh was born in Azerbaijan, a republic of the Soviet States. She first came to prominence as a composer and performer while still a student of the celebrated composer Kara Karayev. Ali-Zadeh is highly regarded for her creativity and distinctive style. Her compositions draw from the vocabulary of modern European classical music, including the Second Viennese School, and incorporate the sounds of mugham (the main modal unit of Arabic music), music traditional to Azerbaijan. As a pianist, she performs at international festivals, playing programs that include the works of Crumb, Messiaen, and Schoenberg, composers she has popularized for Eastern audiences. She is recognized as a master interpreter of works by 20th century European and American composers, the Soviet avant-garde, and traditional Azerbaijani composers.

About *Mugam Sayagi*, Franghiz Ali-Zadeh writes:

Kronos encouraged me to use the Azeri musical tradition of Mugami—a secret language used in the 16th century to disguise emotions discouraged in Islam. Through Mugami, the ecstatic longing of a man for a woman could be expressed as the love of God.
It begins as a meditation, in darkness, only the cello is lit, trying to wake the world with the call to prayer. The cello is the composer’s voice—a woman. Nothing changes, and you don’t believe it can. It goes on and on, then suddenly, it explodes, in a flash! Concealed passion breaks out in wild dancing, or in virtuosic cadenzas. The violin plays an unbounded song of love where the soul flies high into the sky. It’s a competition among them all—who can be more perfect? Then comes the finale, and an end. The cello is alone again, intoning the sunset prayer. The sound of the triangle echoes a myriad of stars.

Zaghlala (2017)
Islam Chipsy and his band EEK are a three-way force of nature from Cairo, Egypt, described by those who’ve been caught in the eye of their storm as one of the most exciting live propositions on the planet. At the core of the group lies electro chaabi keyboard pioneer Islam Chipsy, whose joyous, freewheeling sonic blitz warps the standard oriental scale system into otherworldly shapes, as flanked by Mohamed Karam and Mahmoud Refat raining down a percussive maelstrom behind dual drum kits.

About Zaghlala, Andrew Gilbert writes:

If Kronos Quartet had a motto it might be something like: Taking string players to places they’ve never been before. With Jacob Garchik’s surging arrangement of Zaghlala (Blurred vision caused by strong light hitting the eyes) by Egyptian keyboardist Islam Chipsy, Kronos not only transports intrepid string quartets to the ecstatic milieu of a Cairo nightclub, the chart literally turns one ensemble member into a drummer adding percussive drive to the tune’s lapidary churn. As part of 50 for the Future, Kronos’s ongoing project to make new music works readily available to aspiring string ensembles, the score and parts are accessible free on the Kronos website, “where you can see how the piece can be played in such a way that each one of us can be the drummer,” says Kronos’s David Harrington. “Wouldn’t it be cool if every string quartet player in the world could be this Arabic drummer? So far our violist is ours, but that’s not to say that the rest of us won’t do it at some point.”

With his ear already drawn to the region by the Arab spring protests, Harrington “kept coming back to Islam Chipsy,” he says. Part of Egypt’s thriving underground music scene, Chipsy’s EEK trio has carved out a singular sonic niche distinct from the electro chaabi artists who are almost required at wedding celebrations. Raw and lo-fi, his music is both virtuosic and unabashedly hand-crafted: “There’s a certain way that he plays where he takes his fist and slams it into the keyboard that feels so visceral and exciting,”
Harrington says. “There’s also this sense of fun and abandonment. I can imagine thousands of people dancing.”

Kronos premiered *Zaghlala* at NPR Music’s 10th Anniversary Concert in December 2017. For Garchik, the challenge was capturing the torrential textures generated by the drum kit tandem of Mohamed Karam and Mahmoud Refat and Chipsy’s keyboard, “which he plays like a percussionist,” Garchik says, employing inexpensive, cracked software like FruityLoops on a keyboard designed for Middle Eastern scales. The instrument allows him to play huge, swooping glissandos with a finger, “glissing an octave or more up or down, and I wasn’t sure if Kronos would be able to handle the speed and range. The string players have to do the hard work, but it comes off really well.”

While some pieces by Arab composers that Garchik has arranged for Kronos require careful notation to capture microtonal nuances, on *Zaghlala*, he was more concerned with maintaining the piece’s relentless momentum.

“One of them actually has to play a percussion instrument,” he says. “That’s always a challenge, but Kronos is not afraid. For the other players, the parts are very rhythmic and syncopated. I simplified the drum part so that it’s playable for someone in a string quartet. The challenge is to play together and get a nice groove.”

**Wa Habibi** (traditional, arr. 2003)

*Wa Habibi* is a devotional hymn drawn from the Arab Christian tradition in Lebanon. Meditative and soul-searching, it is often sung on Good Friday as celebrated in the Arab Orthodox Church. On this holy day, the hymn evokes the love and sorrow of spiritual faith. This arrangement of *Wa Habibi* is based on an interpretation, recorded live on Easter in the early 1960s, by the legendary Lebanese singer, Fairuz (also spelled Fayrouz or Fairouz). Met with unprecedented enthusiasm, Fairuz’s early songs featured the singer’s distinct vocal timbre and lyrics expressing romantic love and nostalgia for village life. They meshed with a delicate orchestral blend, in which Arab instruments figured prominently, but which also subtly incorporated European instruments and European popular dance rhythms. She also became known for her renditions of Arab folk tunes and religious songs. By the early 1960s Fairuz was a celebrity throughout the Arab world; in her homeland, she is sometimes known as the “Ambassador to the Stars” for her emotional singing.

**Tashweesh** (2008)

Ramallah Underground (RU) is a musical collective, based in Ramallah, Palestine, attempting to rejuvenate Arabic culture through their music. RU was founded by artists Boikutt, Stormtrap, and Aswatt. They produce music
ranging from hip hop to trip hop to down tempo. The members started off as producers; Boikutt and Stormtrap later picked up the mic and began to MC in Arabic, which added a political layer to the music. Their work comes out of a deep sense of their local culture and the imposing presence of Palestine in their lives.

The members of RU, as producers and as MCs, have collaborated and performed with artists from across the globe including Lebanon, United Kingdom, Switzerland, United States, France, The Netherlands, and other countries. RU has also performed live shows in Ramallah, Bethlehem, Vienna, London, Cairo, Lausanne, Brussels, Amsterdam, and Washington, DC. In recent live performances, RU has incorporated a visual set, created by Palestinian visual artist Ruanne. RU’s hope is to give a voice to Palestinians and Arabs, bringing an alternative voice from the Arab world.

About Tashweesh, David Harrington of the Kronos Quartet writes:

I first heard Ramallah Underground on MySpace. Their sound was distinctive, and they seemed very interesting as a group. They were open to the world of music. I began an email correspondence with them, and found that one member lived in Palestine, another in Vienna, and the third in Dubai. I sent them a bunch of Kronos CDs and in exchange they sent me a lot of their music. After I had spent a lot of time with their work, I felt it would be great if they would write for Kronos. Tashweesh is the result.

Ya Mun Dakhal Bahr Al-Hawa (arr. 2019)

The seat of ancient civilizations dating back to 5000 BCE, Yemen has been beset by the worst humanitarian crisis in the world during the past three years as various countries pursuing their own interests stoke a grinding civil war. The nation on the southwestern tip of the Arabian Peninsula is the region’s poorest and possesses no oil resources, but culturally, Yemeni artists have long enriched the Middle East. Under regular conditions it would hardly be surprising that Kronos Quartet sought out music from the beleaguered country given the ensemble’s history of adapting expansive and often previously untapped musical realms for the string quartet. But these aren’t normal times.

Kronos’s passion for connecting with international artists took on particular urgency with Music for Change: The Banned Countries. Commissioned specially for The Banned Countries program, Jacob Garchik’s arrangement of Fatimah Al-Zaelaeyah’s Ya Mun Dakhal Bahr Al-Hawa (Hey, Who Enters The Sea of Passion?) was inspired by the opening track on the 2013 album Qat, Coffee & Qambus: Raw 45s from Yemen, a compilation by the Atlanta-based label Dust-to-Digital.

Featuring Al-Zaelaeyah’s incantatory vocals accompanied only by a deft hand-percussionist playing a copper plate, the piece first came to David Harrington’s attention shortly after the album was released, but years later
he couldn’t recall where he’d heard the striking track. “I’d filed it away in my mind, but when we wanted music from Yemen as part of The Banned Countries I kept listening and listening and wasn’t finding something quite right or as distinctive as I remembered,” he says. “I was finally able to track it down. Kronos is always looking for new ways of being a quartet, of expressing quartetness, and Jacob has definitely taken us to a new place with Ya Mun Dakhal Bahr Al-Hawa.”

With the cello taking on the vocal line, the other members of Kronos trade their string instruments for metallic objects, becoming a clanking percussion section. Garchik set out to provide as much information as he could, approximating the female vocalist’s microtonal variations in Western notation. But ultimately, he’s creating something new, distilling “the essence of what makes it sound interesting and beautiful,” he says. “With pieces like this, the people who are performing have done it their whole lives, and are often carrying on an oral tradition. They have a very particular way of making music. I give the cello quarter tones. But the woman is singing very naturally, and like anyone singing, she doesn’t necessarily do the same microtonal inflections every time. You have to decide whether to enunciate every tiny nuance. I try to make it pretty simple.” Hoping to capture beauty and expand possibilities for the string quartet, Kronos continues to celebrate the brilliant humanity in a place where nothing is simple.

—Program note by Andrew Gilbert

La Sidounak Sayyada (2009)
Omar Souleyman is a Syrian musical legend. Since 1994, he and his musicians have been a staple of folk-pop throughout Syria, issuing more than 500 studio and live-recorded albums which are easily spotted in the shops of any Syrian city. He was born in rural Northeastern Syria, and the myriad musical traditions of the region are evident in his music. Classical Arabic mawal-style vocalization gives way to high-octane Syrian Dabke (the regional folkloric dance and party music), Iraqi Choubi, and a host of Arabic, Kurdish, and Turkish styles, among others. This amalgamation is truly the sound of Syria. His popularity has risen steadily and the group tirelessly performs concerts throughout Syria and has accepted invitations to perform abroad in Saudi Arabia, Dubai, and Lebanon.

Bia Ke Berem Ba Mazar (traditional, arr. 2018)
About Bia Ke Berem Ba Mazar, Milad Yousufi writes:

Bia Ke Berem ba Mazar is an old folkloric song from Afghanistan sung in Dari, which is one of the dialects of the modern Persian language spoken in Afghanistan, Iran, and Pakistan. The song is about the beautiful, historically holy city of Mazar-e Sharif and two lovers. It is also a plea for all human beings to see an end to suffering. The reason I had this song in mind to arrange as
a refugee was to express my love for Afghanistan and Afghan people who have witnessed decades of war and invasion, and yet, who always manage to rise up and rebuild.

Ayesha, a beautiful lady whose love story became well known in the entire Khorasan, composed and sang this song for her beloved in the 16th century. Their love story is still well known and often discussed, especially on the first day of spring, as their love story and dreams came true on the first day of spring (the Persian New Year).

My arrangement of Bia Ke Berem Ba Mazar is inspired by four different versions that are being performed worldwide in different languages, styles, and tempos.

Let us go to Mazar (Shrine) O dear Mullah Mohammad
To see the tulips there, O sweet beloved
O generous one, O lion of God, heal my pain
Plead on my behalf before God
Let us go to Mazar (Shrine) O dear Mullah Mohammad
Let us weep and weep, O sweet beloved

Dooyo (arr. 2018)

After Kronos’s Artistic Director David Harrington mentioned The Banned Countries initiative while chatting with a Somali woman following a performance, she spoke of the profusion of extraordinary music that surrounded her when she was growing up. “I asked if she could make a selection of music that was important to her, and I got this amazing email with all kinds of possibilities,” Harrington says. “One of the first suggestions was Dur-Dur Band. I spent the next year listening to as many of their tracks as I could find, and I keep coming back to Dooyo. There’s something remarkable about that music. It magnetizes me every time I hear it.”

Gleaned from the album Dur-Dur Band Vol. 5 (Awesome Tapes From Africa), the incantatory piece exemplifies the roiling creativity and wide-open aesthetic that characterized Mogadishu in the 1980s. While steeped in jazz and traditional Somali forms, Dur-Dur Band was dialed into popular music from around the world, particularly funk and disco grooves reabsorbed and refracted in various permutations around the dauntingly diverse continent. Dooyo is a dance floor anthem with infectious call and response vocals, and it’s not hard to hear why the group was among Somalia’s most popular by the late 1980s. Like in neighboring Ethiopia, a golden age of music came to a rapid and horrific end with the fall of the central government. Decades of unrelenting civil war have scattered Somali musicians around the world (Dur-Dur Band’s lead vocalist is reportedly living in Columbus, Ohio), and the band’s recordings have survived mostly via low-fi cassette tapes.

Commissioned to create an arrangement of Dooyo, go-to Kronos confederate Jacob Garchik keyed into the mysterious details that make the
piece distinctive. “If you transcribe the song it doesn’t look that different from any American funk tune, but something about the low-fi recording and the sound of the guitar is very African, a rhythmic nuance or the way it’s tuned,” he said. More than anything he sought to tap into the song's celebratory feel. “It’s going to be funky and fun and danceable,” he said. “The challenge is trying to make it groove. I’d like to do a little sound design too. There’s a delay effect when the vocal comes in, and that’s something that would be cool to do on the violin. We’re creating something new of course, but hopefully this arrangement can let people know about music that they otherwise might not hear.”

—Program note by Andrew Gilbert

**Escalay (1989)**

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

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

“I was in New York when the Aswan Dam was finished. I lost my village. When I went back and saw my village and my people in a different place, I saw in their eyes the loss. I saw my people were lost. They had moved to an almost semi-desert place. When I came back I was lost myself. I was playing my oud, doing nothing except repeating a phrase. I was on the water wheel, the oldest surviving machine in our land. Whoever sits on that machine will become hypnotized by that noise.

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

—Program note by Derk Richardson
The Sun Rises (2016)

About The Sun Rises, Sahba Aminikia writes:

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

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

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

The Sun Rises
Poem by Forough Farrokhzad, English translation by Sohrab Mahdavi

See how sorrow melts drop by drop
In my eyes
How my mutinous shadow
Becomes prey to the sun
See
How my whole existence is in ruins
An ember set fire to my being
I am lifted to heights
I am trapped
See
How my entire horizon
Fills with shooting stars
You came from afar
From the land of perfume and light
You set me on a stellar path
You take me beyond stars
Now that we are treading on heights
Wash me with waves of wine
Wrap me in the velvet of your kiss
Want me in lasting nights
Leave me no more
Separate me not from these stars
See
How you shine and the Sun rises
Vanishing Lines
Poem by Hafez, English translation by Sohrab Mahdavi

A life ring is my longing for you, drowning, as I am, in wine
Advise the barrel to keep the air locked, for the tavern is shipwrecked
The beloved is gone and in my tearful eyes
Her image is drawn in vanishing lines
Wake up my eyes for there is great peril
In this continuous flood of tears at the doors of sleep
The mountains and plains are full and verdant
This world is but a passing current, let us waste no time

My Ruthless Companion
Poem by Rumi, English translation by Sohrab Mahdavi

Oh my companion, my ruthless companion
My beloved and my treasurer, my ally and my secret bearer
On earth you are my moon, at midnight you are my morning dawn
Oh, my sweet mist, you are my protection in this storm
You find your way into my soul like a healing worm
You are my faith and my religion, a sea of gems brimming
You are a torch to night-farers, a rope to the drowning
You are a compass to any caravan, you are my guide
You are my cellmate in this prison, a laughing master at my side
To be in your presence requires a hundred times my best stride

Songs (2018)
Leyli’s Nightingales and I Was Dead

Building on a relationship that began at Kronos’s hometown Kronos Festival in 2017, Kronos and Iranian singer Mahsa Vahdat now bring their collaboration to Music for Change: The Banned Countries. Vahdat composes most of her songs, drawing inspiration from poems by classical Persian poets like Hafez and Rumi, as well as contemporary poets like Forough Farrokhzad and Mohammad Ebrahim Jafari. Her husband Atabak Elyasi, a composer and setar player, often arranges her music.

—Program note by Erik Hillestad

Leyli’s Nightingales
Poem by Atabak Elyasi, English translation by Mahsa Vahdat and Erik Hillestad

Once upon a time a lover gave to Leyli
two nightingales which were flying in a garden
One of the nightingales is made by dawn and light
the other one is from the light of the moon and the sun
One sings from the depth of her heart
the bitter story of the present times
The other one makes songs from the stars
and spreads them to the graveyard of the nameless
If Leyli touches the two nightingales,
they will sing the song of liberation
I Was Dead
Poem by Rumi, English translation by Mahsa Vahdat and Erik Hillestad

I was dead, I became alive, I was tears, I became laughter
The happiness of love came, and I became eternal happiness
My eyes are full of joy, I have a brave soul
I have courage like a lion, I became the shining Venus

He told me: you are not crazy enough, you don’t deserve this home
I went and became crazy, I was entangled with chains
He told me: you are not drunk, go away, you don’t belong to this circle!
I went and became intoxicated, I was filled with joy

I belong to you, my moon, come and behold you and me!
Because of his laughter, I became a laughing garden

Kronos Quartet
David Harrington, violin; John Sherba, violin; Hank Dutt, viola; and Sunny Yang, cello

For 45 years, San Francisco’s Kronos Quartet has combined a spirit of fearless exploration with a commitment to continually reimagine the string quartet experience. In the process, Kronos has become one of the world’s most celebrated and influential ensembles, performing thousands of concerts, releasing more than 60 recordings, collaborating with many of the world’s most accomplished composers and performers, and commissioning more than 1,000 works and arrangements for string quartet. Kronos has received more than 40 awards, including the prestigious Polar Music Prize, Avery Fisher Prize, and the WOMEX (World Music Expo) Artist Award.

Integral to Kronos’s work is a series of long-running collaborations with many of the world’s foremost composers, including Franghiz Ali-Zadeh, Philip Glass, Nicole Lizée, Vladimir Martynov, Steve Reich, Terry Riley, and Aleksandra Vrebalov. Additional collaborators have included Sam Amidon, Laurie Anderson, Asha Bhosle, Noam Chomsky, Rhiannon Giddens, Sam Green, Zakir Hussain, múm, Trevor Paglen, Van Dyke Parks, San Francisco Girls Chorus, Tanya Tagaq, Trio Da Kali, Mahsa Vahdat, Tom Waits, Wu Man, and Howard Zinn.

On tour for five months per year, Kronos appears in the world’s most prestigious concert halls, clubs, and festivals. Kronos is equally prolific and wide-ranging on recordings, including two Grammy-winning albums—Landfall with Laurie Anderson (2018) and Alban Berg’s Lyric Suite featuring Dawn Upshaw (2003)—both released by longtime label Nonesuch Records. Kronos’s other recent releases include Ladilikan (World Circuit Records) with Trio Da Kali, an ensemble of Malian griot musicians assembled by Aga Khan Music Initiative; Clouded Yellow (Cantaloupe Music) by Bang on a Can founding composer Michael Gordon, and Placeless (Kirkelig Kulturverksted) with Iranian vocalists Mahsa and Marjan Vahdat.
The nonprofit Kronos Performing Arts Association manages all aspects of Kronos’s work, including the commissioning of new works, concert tours and home season performances, education programs, and the annual Kronos Festival. In 2015, Kronos launched 50 for the Future: The Kronos Learning Repertoire, an education and legacy project that is commissioning—and distributing online for free—50 new works for string quartet composed by 25 women and 25 men.

**Mahsa Vahdat**

Mahsa Vahdat is one of the most important performers of Persian vocal music in the world today. Her career has given a deeper knowledge about Iranian poetry and music to large audiences in Europe, America, Asia, Oceania, and Africa. Vahdat has developed her personal style based on the Persian vocal tradition of classical and regional folk music, but with a contemporary expression. She has always searched for ways to make her music relevant to the present world. Even if the origin of her styles is Iranian, she believes in her music’s ability to express a universal message of humanism and freedom. Her collaboration with musicians from Iran and many other parts of the world has contributed to the development of her personal expression.

Born in Tehran in 1973, Vahdat entered Tehran Arts University in 1993 and graduated with a BA in music in 1995. Since then, she has performed as an independent singer and musician in many concerts and festivals in Asia, Europe, America, and Africa, together with musicians from Iran, Europe, and the United States. She has also appeared on stage with her sister Marjan Vahdat, who has also been involved in several of her recordings.

Vahdat composes most of her songs herself, often with poems by classical Persian poets like Hafez and Rumi or contemporary ones like Forough Farrokhzad and Mohammad Ibrahim Jafari. Her husband Atabak Elyasi, a composer and setar player, often takes part in arranging her music.

Without being visible in her own society due to restrictions of female solo voice after the Islamic Revolution in 1979 in Iran, Vahdat and her sister Marjan have had continuous contact with a large audience who appreciates their art, both in Iran and abroad.

Following her participation in the album *Lullabies from the Axis of Evil* (2004), Vahdat started a long-lasting collaboration with the Norwegian record label Kirkelig Kulturverksted (KKV) and its leader Erik Hillestad, who has produced most of her albums. This collaboration led to a worldwide release of a series of records and a number of tours and concerts in many countries.

Since 2007, Vahdat has been one of the ambassadors of Freemuse Organization, an independent international organization that advocates freedom of expression for musicians and composers worldwide. In 2010, she was granted the Freemuse Award.
Arranger Biographies

Sahba Aminikia
Born in Tehran, Iran, in 1981, Sahba Aminikia studied music composition in Russia at the St. Petersburg State Conservatory under Boris Ivanovich Tishchenko, a post-graduate student of Dimitri Shostakovich. He received a bachelor of music and a master of music with honors from San Francisco Conservatory of Music under Dan Becker, David Garner, and David Conte, where he was the proud recipient of Phyllis Wattis Foundation scholarship. His Tar o Pood (Warp and Weft) commissioned by Nasrin Marzban for Kronos Quartet was the second-place recipient of the American Prize 2015 in composition, professional chamber music category.

Atabak Elyasi
Born in Tehran, Iran, in 1964, Atabak Elyasi graduated from the Tehran University of Art with a BA in music and a MA in composition. He was the head of the composition department, music faculty from 2003 to 2015, and he has been a member of the music faculty in Tehran University of Art since 2003. Elyasi has been working as a musician (setar player) and arranger with Mahsa and Marjan Vahdat since 2000. He has appeared in many concerts and music festivals in Asia, Europe, and the United States. His album I am Eve was released in 2008, and he has performed on the albums Songs from a Persian Garden (2007) and Twinklings of Hope (2012).

Jacob Garchik
Jacob Garchik, multi-instrumentalist and composer, was born in San Francisco in 1976 and has lived in New York since 1994. At home in a wide variety of styles and musical roles, he is a vital part of the downtown and Brooklyn scene, playing trombone with the Lee Konitz Nonet, Ohad Talmor/Steve Swallow Sextet, Mary Halvorson Octet, and the John Hollenbeck Large Ensemble. He has released four albums as a leader including The Heavens: the Atheist Gospel Trombone Album. He co-leads Brooklyn’s premiere Mexican brass band, Banda de los Muertos. Since 2006 Garchik has contributed dozens of arrangements and transcriptions for Kronos Quartet of music from all over the world.

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

**Milad Yousufi**

Milad Yousufi is a pianist, composer, conductor, poet, singer, painter, and calligrapher of Afghan culture and heritage. Born in 1995 during the civil war and Taliban rule in Afghanistan, when music was completely banned, Yousufi began painting at age two—he painted piano keys on paper and pretended to play. For five years, when the Taliban rule was lifted, the arts flourished in Afghanistan, and after only three years of formal piano training, Yousufi was accepted into a music program in Denmark. Upon his return to Afghanistan, Yousufi began teaching at the Afghanistan National Institute of Music, and when the Afghan Youth Orchestra was formed in 2011, Yousufi became the first Afghan conductor. Yousufi has since moved to the United States, after being awarded a full scholarship to attend Mannes School of Music in New York. He has composed for the New York Philharmonic Chamber Orchestra and the Refugee Orchestra Project, among others. He hopes to make a difference in the future of music and culture in Afghanistan and be the bridge between east and west.

**Commission Credits**

Milad Yousufi’s arrangement of *Bia Ke Berem Ba Mazar* (traditional); Jacob Garchik’s arrangement of Dur-Dur Band’s *Dooyo*; Mamadou Kouyaté’s bass lines; and David Harrington, Joel Tarman, and Nikolás McConnie-Saad’s sound collages were commissioned by the Hamid and Christina Moghadam Program in Iranian Studies at Stanford University for the Kronos Quartet’s *Music for Change: The Banned Countries*.

Franghiz Ali-Zadeh’s *Mugam Sayagi* was commissioned for the Kronos Quartet by Nora Norden and appears on Kronos’s recordings *Mugam Sayagi: Music of Franghiz Ali-Zadeh*, *Night Prayers*, and Kronos’s 10-CD box set *Kronos Quartet: 25 Years*, all released on Nonesuch Records. She has written four works for Kronos, including a piece for *50 for the Future: The Kronos Learning Repertoire*.

Islam Chipsy’s *Zaghlala* was commissioned as part of the Kronos Performing Arts Association’s *50 for the Future: The Kronos Learning Repertoire*, which is made possible by a group of adventurous partners, including Carnegie Hall, and many others. Launched in the 2015–2016 season, Kronos’s *50 for the Future* is commissioning 50 new works—by 25 women and 25 men—devoted to contemporary approaches to the string quartet and designed
expressly for the training of students and emerging professionals. Kronos premieres each piece and creates companion digital materials, including scores, recordings, and performance notes, which can be accessed online for free.

Stephen Prutsman’s arrangement of *Wa Habibi* (*Beloved*) was commissioned for the Kronos Quartet by Simon Collier.

Ramallah Underground’s *Tashweesh*, arranged by Jacob Garchik, was commissioned for the Kronos Quartet by the Columbia Foundation and the David Harrington Research and Development Fund. Kronos’s recording is available on *Floodplain*, released on Nonesuch Records.

Jacob Garchik’s arrangement of Fatimah Al-Zaelaeyah’s *Ya Mun Dakhal Bahr Al-Hawa* (*Hey, Who Enters The Sea of Passion?*) was commissioned by Carnegie Hall for the Kronos Quartet’s *Music for Change: The Banned Countries*.

Jacob Garchik’s arrangement of Omar Souleyman’s *La Sidounak Sayyada* was commissioned for the Kronos Quartet by the David Harrington Research and Development Fund.

Hamza El Din’s *Escalay* was commissioned for the Kronos Quartet by Lincoln Center for the Performing Arts, and is included on the Quartet’s Nonesuch recording *Pieces of Africa*. Sheet music for *Escalay* is available in Volume 1 of the *Kronos Collection*, a performing edition published by Boosey & Hawkes.

Sahba Aminikia’s arrangements for *The Sun Rises*, a suite of works by Mahsa Vahdat, were commissioned for the Kronos Quartet by the Phyllis C. Wattis Foundation.

Atabak Elyasi’s arrangement of Mahsa Vahdat’s *Leyli’s Nightingales* was commissioned by Kirkelig Kulturverksted.

Atabak Elyasi’s arrangement of Mahsa Vahdat’s *I Was Dead* was commissioned for Kronos Festival 2018, a program of the Kronos Performing Arts Association.
For the Kronos Quartet/
Kronos Performing Arts Association

Janet Cowperthwaite, Managing Director
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Nikolás McConnie-Saad, Office Manager
Brian Mohr, Sound Designer, Technical Manager
Kären Nagy, Strategic Initiatives Director
Brian H. Scott, Lighting Designer

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The Kronos Quartet records for Nonesuch Records.

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The Schwartz Center gratefully acknowledges the generous ongoing support of Donna and Marvin Schwartz.

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Upcoming Music Events

Go to music.emory.edu to view the complete list of upcoming music events. Ticket prices are listed in the following order: Full price/Emory student price (unless otherwise noted as the price for all students). For more information, contact the Schwartz Center Box Office at 404.727.5050, or visit arts.emory.edu.

Tuesday, September 17, 8:00 p.m., Col Legno Bassoon and Percussion Duo, Schwartz Center, Emerson Concert Hall, free

Friday, September 20, noon, Mozart @ the Museum, ECMSA: Cooke Noontime Series, Michael C. Carlos Museum, free

Saturday, September 21, 8:00 p.m., Around the World in 60 Minutes, Schwartz Center, Emerson Concert Hall, free

Friday, October 4, 8:00 p.m., All Creatures Great and Small, Atlanta Master Chorale, Schwartz Center, Emerson Concert Hall, $30/$10 all students

Saturday, October 5, 8:00 p.m., All Creatures Great and Small, Atlanta Master Chorale, Schwartz Center, Emerson Concert Hall, $30/$10 all students

Sunday, October 6, 4:00 p.m., Sibling Rivalry, ECMSA: Emerson Series, Schwartz Center, Emerson Concert Hall, free

Thursday, October 10, 6:00 p.m., Jazz on the Green, Patterson Green, free

Friday, October 18, 8:00 p.m., Brad Mehldau, piano, and Ian Bostridge, tenor, Candler Concert Series, Schwartz Center, Emerson Concert Hall, $55/$10

Saturday, October 19, 8:00 p.m., Emory Wind Ensemble, Schwartz Center, Emerson Concert Hall, free

Sunday, October 20, 4:00 p.m., Just Jazzin’ Around, ECMSA: Family Series, Michael C. Carlos Museum, free

Thursday, October 24, 6:00 p.m., Jazz on the Green, Patterson Green, free

Thursday, October 24, 8:00 p.m., Emory University Symphony Orchestra, Schwartz Center, Emerson Concert Hall, free

Friday, October 25, noon, The Art of Song, ECMSA: Cooke Noontime Series, Michael C. Carlos Museum, free
Saturday, October 26, 8:00 p.m., Emory Choirs, Family Weekend Concert, Schwartz Center, Emerson Concert Hall, free: tickets required

Sunday, October 27, 4:00 p.m., Emory Concerto and Aria Competition, Schwartz Center, Emerson Concert Hall, free

Sunday, November 3, 7:00 p.m., Joyce DiDonato—In War and Peace: Harmony Through Music, Candler Concert Series, Schwartz Center, Emerson Concert Hall, $90/$10

Friday, November 8, noon, Emily Uematsu, violin, ECMSA: Cooke Noontime Series, Michael C. Carlos Museum, free

Sunday, November 10, 4:00 p.m., Emory Chamber Ensembles, Schwartz Center, Emerson Concert Hall, free

Sunday, November 10, 7:00 p.m., Emory Collaborative Piano, Schwartz Center, Emerson Concert Hall, free

Wednesday, November 13, 6:00 p.m., Vocal Symposium: African American Spirituals and Art Song, Performing Arts Studio, 1804 N. Decatur Rd., free

Wednesday, November 13, 8:00 p.m., Emory Youth Symphony Orchestras, Schwartz Center, Emerson Concert Hall, free

Thursday, November 14, 4:00 p.m., Vocal Symposium: African American Spirituals and Art Song, Performing Arts Studio, 1804 N. Decatur Rd., free

Friday, November 15, 8:00 p.m., Alexandra Shatalova Prior, oboe, artist affiliate recital, Schwartz Center, Emerson Concert Hall, free

Sunday, November 17, 4:00 p.m., Songs of Norway, ECMSA Emerson Series, Schwartz Center, Emerson Concert Hall, free

IN CONSIDERATION Please turn off all electronic devices.

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COUGH DROPS Available in the lobby.

USHERS Members of Music at Emory Volunteers and Alpha Phi Omega, a national service and social fraternity. Call 404.727.6640 for ushering opportunities.

EVENT AND PROGRAM INFORMATION Available online at arts.emory.edu.

ACCESSIBILITY The Schwartz Center for Performing Arts is committed to providing performances and facilities accessible to all. Please direct accommodation requests to the Schwartz Center Box Office at 404.727.5050, or by email at boxoffice@emory.edu. For seating accommodations, please contact us at least 24 hours in advance of the event.

FRONT COVER PHOTO By Evan Neff.

TREE LIGHTS AND EXTERIOR ARCHITECTURAL BUILDING LIGHTS Made possible by a generous gift from Donna and Marvin Schwartz.
Kronos Quartet with Mahsa Vahdat
September 14, 2019 at 8:00 p.m.

Brad Mehldau, piano
and Ian Bostridge, tenor
October 18, 2019 at 8:00 p.m.

Joyce DiDonato
In War and Peace: Harmony Through Music
November 3, 2019 at 7:00 p.m.

Royal Philharmonic Orchestra
with Khatia Buniatishvili, piano
January 15, 2020 at 8:00 p.m.

Pablo Sáinz Villegas
Americano Trio
February 29, 2020 at 8:00 p.m.

Jane Bunnett
and Maqueque
March 19, 2020 at 8:00 p.m.

Robert McDuffie, violin
and Robert Spano, piano
April 10, 2020 at 8:00 p.m.