

BAM

2017 NEXT WAVE FESTIVAL

BROOKLYN ACADEMY OF MUSIC PETER JAY SHARP BUILDING 30 LAFAYETTE AVENUE BROOKLYN, NY 11217—1486

Vietnam War whistleblower is the focus of *My Lai*, an evening-length work performed by Kronos Quartet, Rinde Eckert, and Vân-Ánh Võ, Sep 27—30

NY premiere exposes the trauma of war through an intimate character study of Warrant Officer Hugh C. Thompson, Jr.

Bloomberg Philanthropies is the Season Sponsor

My Lai

Kronos Quartet, Rinde Eckert & Vân-Ánh Võ
Music by Jonathan Berger
Libretto by Harriet Scott Chessman

Direction and set design by Mark DeChiazza and Rinde Eckert
Video design by Mark DeChiazza
Lighting design by Brian H. Scott

BAM Harvey Theater (651 Fulton St.)

Sep 27—30 at 7:30pm

Tickets start at \$30

“Gripping...delicately woven. Eckert [gives a] tour de force performance...”
— *Chicago Tribune*

Brooklyn, NY/Aug 23, 2017—An evening-length sung monodrama, *My Lai* focuses on the emotional toll of the infamous 1968 civilian massacre by US troops in Vietnam and the military’s attempted cover up. This wrenching account of the event and its aftermath is told through the eyes of Warrant Officer Hugh C. Thompson, Jr., who attempted to stop the killing. Composed by Jonathan Berger with libretto by Harriet Scott Chessman, the work is scored for tenor, string quartet, and traditional Vietnamese instruments, and features tenor Rinde Eckert, Kronos Quartet and instrumentalist Vân-Ánh Võ who plays the đàn Tranh (zither), the đàn Bầu (monochord), the đàn T’rung (bamboo xylophone), and trống (traditional drums). The program at BAM will begin with a short piece by Berger, created in collaboration with Kronos Quartet’s David Harrington and Vân-Ánh Võ, titled *My Lai Lullaby*.

The massacre of over 500 innocent civilians by American soldiers in the village of My Lai on March 16, 1968, was one of the darkest moments of the Vietnam War—one that traumatized the nation and swayed the course of history. The events of that day may well have gone unnoticed save for the actions of a young army helicopter crew led by pilot Thompson who, by happenstance, witnessed the killings in the course of a routine reconnaissance flight. Appalled

by what he saw, Thompson interceded by reporting the incident, and making three landings that ultimately allowed civilians to escape. During one landing—aghast at their inability to stop the slaughter—Thompson threatened to have his crew open fire on his fellow troops if they continued killing villagers. When they touched down a second time, Thompson’s crew spotted movement in a ditch of victims. While searching the mass grave for survivors, they found a child bloodied, but living, pulled him from his dead mother’s grasp, and flew him safely to a hospital in Quảng Ngãi. The refusal of Thompson and his crew to remain silent about the massacre forced the military to conduct an inquiry and trial that shook the national conscience, and left Thompson vilified as disloyal for much of his life.

My Lai takes place in a hospital room where Thompson, surrendering to cancer, is under hospice care. Despite his courage that day and his beleaguered perseverance for justice, he remains deeply wounded, irrevocably haunted by the senseless suffering he witnessed. There is no closure or resolution to the grief, sorrow, and rage he feels because of his fellow soldiers’ brutality.

The staged version of *My Lai* had its world premiere at Chicago’s Harris Theater where the *Chicago Tribune* praised the libretto stating, “Chessman’s memory play mixes poetry, slang and hurt with fierce brilliance,” and characterized the score as “growly thickets of notes, pages of anguished arpeggios and contrasting stretches of elegiac calm to relieve the pervasive agitation, despair and dread.” Eckert’s performance was a “tour de force” whose “strong technique coped splendidly with the high-lying vocal lines.”

About the artists

For more than 40 years, San Francisco’s **Kronos Quartet**—David Harrington (violin), John Sherba (violin), Hank Dutt (viola), and Sunny Yang (cello)—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 intriguing and accomplished composers and performers, and commissioning over 900 works and arrangements for string quartet. Kronos has received over 40 awards, including the Polar Music and Avery Fisher Prizes, two of the most prestigious awards given to musicians.

Integral to Kronos’ work is a series of long-running collaborations with many of the world’s foremost composers, including Americans Terry Riley, Philip Glass, and Steve Reich; Azerbaijan’s Franghiz Ali-Zadeh; Russia’s Vladimir Martynov; Poland’s Henryk Górecki; and Serbian-American Aleksandra Vrebalov. Additional collaborators have included Wu Man, Laurie Anderson, Tanya Tagaq, Mahsa Vahdat, Trevor Paglen, Van Dyke Parks, múm, Dawn Upshaw, Noam Chomsky, Tom Waits, Asha Bhosle, Taraf de Haïdouks, 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 the Grammy- and Latin Grammy-nominated *Nuevo* (2002) and the 2004 Grammy-winner Alban Berg’s *Lyric Suite*. Kronos’ most recent releases include the *One Earth, One People, One Love: Kronos Plays Terry Riley* box set; *Folk Songs*, which features Sam Amidon, Olivia Chaney, Rhiannon Giddens, and Natalie Merchant singing traditional songs; and *Ladilikan*, a collaborative album with Trio Da Kali, a “super-group” of Malian griot musicians assembled by Aga Khan Music Initiative.

The nonprofit Kronos Performing Arts Association manages all aspects of Kronos’ work, including the commissioning of new works, concert tours and home season performances, education programs, and a self-produced Kronos Festival. In 2015, Kronos launched *Fifty for the Future*:

The Kronos Learning Repertoire, an education and legacy project that is commissioning—and distributing for free—the first learning library of contemporary repertoire for string quartet.

Kronos Quartet debuted at BAM during its 1986 Next Wave Festival. Other previous BAM appearances include *Kronos Quartet 95* (Spring 1995), *Kronos Quartet 25th Anniversary* (1998 Next Wave), *Dracula: the Music and Film* (1999 Next Wave), *Sun Rings* (2004 Next Wave), *Kronos Quartet: More Than Four* (2007 Next Wave), *Awakening* (2011 Next Wave), and *Nonesuch Records at BAM: Celebrating a Label without Labels* (2014 Next Wave).

Rinde Eckert is an acclaimed writer, composer, librettist, musician, performer and director. His virtuosic command of gesture, language and song takes the total theatre artist beyond the boundaries of what a “play,” a “dance piece,” an “opera” or “musical” might be, in the service of grappling with complex issues. Sometimes tragic and austere, sometimes broadly comedic, entirely grounded by presence, his work is alchemical: moving from rumination and distillation to hard-won illumination, or its lack. Eckert creates solo work, chamber pieces, and through-composed operas with larger casts, and has long collaborated with other art makers including choreographers, composers, directors, and new music ensembles. His opera/new music theater productions tour throughout the U.S. and to major European and Asian festivals.

Three of Eckert's plays have run successfully off-Broadway, receiving Drama Desk nominations and the Lucille Lortel Award. His theater writing credits include *Highway Ulysses*, *Horizon*, *Orpheus X*, and *And God Created Great Whales*, which had three off-Broadway runs with the original cast and director for a total of 227 performances

Current theater and music projects in which he also performs include *Aging Magician* composed by Paola Prestini with direction by Julian Crouch; *Slide* with composer/performer Steven Macky; and *My Fools: A life in Song*, his newest one-person show.

Eckert was the 2007 finalist for the Pulitzer Prize in Drama. His awards include being named an inaugural Doris Duke Artist in 2012, the 2009 Alpert Award in the Arts for Theatre, a 2007 Guggenheim Fellowship, and the 2005 American Academy of Arts and Letters Marc Blitzstein Award. Rinde lives in New York with his wife, the actress Ellen McLaughlin.

Vanessa Vân-Ánh Võ is one of the finest performers of Vietnamese traditional instruments in the world and a rapidly emerging composer. She dedicates her life to creating music by blending the sounds of Vietnamese instruments with other music genres, and fusing deeply rooted Vietnamese musical traditions with new structures and compositions.

In 1995, Võ won the championship title in the Vietnamese National Đàn Tranh (Zither) Competition. Since settling in the San Francisco Bay Area in 2001, Võ has focused on collaborating with musicians across different genres to create new works, bringing Vietnamese traditional music to a wider audience and preserving her cultural legacy through teaching. She has released three CDs: *Twelve Months, Four Seasons* (2002), *She's Not She* (2009) with award-winning composer Bảo Đố, and *Three-Mountain Pass* (2013), with the Kronos Quartet as her guest artist. Võ has also been collaborator and guest soloist with Southwest Chamber Music, jazz artists, rap artists, and other world music artists. Additionally, she has been co-composer and arranger for the Oscar nominated and Sundance Grand Jury Prize winner for Best Documentary *Daughter from Danang*, the Emmy Award-winning film *Bolinao 52*, and *A Village Called Versailles* the winner of multiple Best Documentary and Audience awards. She has presented her music at Carnegie Hall, Zellerbach Hall, Kennedy Center, NPR, Houston Grand Opera, Yerba Buena Center for the Arts, many world music festivals throughout the U.S.,

and as a guest artist for the Kronos Quartet at the 2012 Cultural Olympiad in London. She has been invited and participated as a screening judge in the World Music category for the 2015 Grammys. In addition to the đàn Tranh, Võ also performs as soloist on the monochord (đàn Bầu), the bamboo xylophone (đàn T'rung), traditional drums (trống) and other traditional instruments.

Recently, in collaboration with Asian American for Community Involvement, a NGO which has served refugees in Santa Clara County for 40 years, Võ received an award from Creative Work Fund for *The Odyssey – from Vietnam to America*, which premiered during the 40th anniversary of the end of Vietnam War, highlighting the incredible power of the human spirit, the value of freedom and the will to survive of the Vietnamese Boat People.

Jonathan Berger's music has been widely hailed for its expressivity and powerful drama. Berger's "dissonant but supple" (*New York Times*) compositions include vocal, orchestral, and chamber music as well as electroacoustic music. Berger's sixth string quartet, *Swallow*, premiered in New York in 2014 with the St. Lawrence String Quartet.

Recent commissions include a work for the Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center, Chamber Music America, Spoleto Festival USA, The National Endowment for the Arts, the Denver Chamber Music Society, and the Gerbode, Mellon, and Ford Fellowships, among others. Berger's violin concerto, *Jiyeh*, was released last year on Harmonia Mundis' Eloquentia Label. Berger's works are also available on Naxos, Centaur, and Sony recordings. Following critically acclaimed performances in California and New York, Berger's opera, *Visitations*, is scheduled to receive its Chicago premiere in 2017.

Berger has been composer-in-residence at Spoleto, Banff, and numerous universities throughout the world. In addition to composing, Berger is an active researcher in music perception and cognition, and has authored over seventy publications. Berger is the Denning Family Provostial Professor in Music at Stanford University.

Harriet Scott Chessman is a fiction writer, the author of the acclaimed novels *The Lost Sketchbook of Edgar Degas*, *Someone Not Really Her Mother*, *The Beauty of Ordinary Things*, *Lydia Cassatt Reading the Morning Paper*, and *Ohio Angels*. Her fiction has been on the *San Francisco Chronicle's* Best Books list and featured on *Good Morning, America* and in *The New York Times*, in addition to being translated into seven languages. She has taught creative writing and literature at Yale University (where she gained her PhD in English), Bread Loaf School of English, and Stanford University. After twelve years in the San Francisco Bay Area, she now lives in Connecticut, where she is working on a new libretto and a collection of short stories.

For press information, contact Sarah Garvey at sgarvey@bam.org or 718.724.8025.

Commissioned by Harris Theater for Music and Dance with support from the Laura and Ricardo Rosenkranz Artistic Innovation Fund and The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, the Gerbode-Hewlett Foundations 2013 Music Commissioning Awards initiative, and the National Endowment for the Arts.

Credits:

Bloomberg Philanthropies is the Season Sponsor.

Programming in the BAM Harvey Theater is endowed by the Doris Duke Charitable Foundation.

BAM 2017 Next Wave Festival supporters: Rose M. Badgeley Residuary Charitable Trust; Bank of America; BNY Mellon; brigittencyc; Con Edison; The Gladys Krieble Delmas Foundation; Epstein Teicher Philanthropies; Fribourg Family Foundation; The Green Fund Inc.; The Francena T. Harrison Foundation Trust; The DuBose and Dorothy Heyward Memorial Fund; The Kovner Foundation; M&T Bank; The Ambrose Monell Foundation; Morgan Stanley; Henry and Lucy Moses Fund, Inc.; Samuel I. Newhouse Foundation, Inc.; Stavros Niarchos Foundation; Onassis Cultural Center NY; Donald A. Pels Charitable Trust; Pfizer Inc.; The Reed Foundation; The Jerome Robbins Foundation, Inc.; The Morris and Alma Schapiro Fund; The Scherman Foundation, Inc.; The SHS Foundation; The Shubert Foundation, Inc.; The Harold and Mimi Steinberg Charitable Trust; The TinMan Fund; Viacom; Virginia B. Toulmin Foundation; The Wall Street Journal; The Winston Foundation, Inc.

Major support for Discounted Ticket Initiatives provided by the Jerome L. Greene Foundation.

Delta is the Official Airline of BAM. The Brooklyn Hospital Center is the Official Healthcare Provider of BAM.

Your tax dollars make BAM programs possible through funding from the City of New York Department of Cultural Affairs and the New York State Council on the Arts with the support of Governor Andrew M. Cuomo and the New York State Legislature. The BAM Next Wave Festival is supported in part by an award from the National Endowment for the Arts. The BAM facilities are owned by the City of New York and benefit from public funds provided through the New York City Department of Cultural Affairs with support from Mayor Bill de Blasio; Cultural Affairs Commissioner Tom Finkelpearl; the New York City Council including Council Speaker Melissa Mark Viverito, Finance Committee Chair Julissa Ferreras, Cultural Affairs Committee Chair Jimmy Van Bramer, Councilmember Laurie Cumbo, and the Brooklyn Delegation of the Council; and Brooklyn Borough President Eric L. Adams. BAM would like to thank the Brooklyn Delegations of the New York State Assembly, Joseph R. Lentol, Delegation Leader; and New York Senate, Senator Velmanette Montgomery.

General Information

BAM Howard Gilman Opera House, BAM Rose Cinemas, and BAMcafé are located in the Peter Jay Sharp building at 30 Lafayette Avenue (between St Felix Street and Ashland Place) in the Fort Greene neighborhood of Brooklyn. BAM Harvey Theater is located two blocks from the main building at 651 Fulton Street (between Ashland and Rockwell Places). Both locations house Greenlight Bookstore at BAM kiosks. BAM Fisher, located at 321 Ashland Place, is the newest addition to the BAM campus and houses the Judith and Alan Fishman Space and Rita K. Hillman Studio. BAM Rose Cinemas is Brooklyn's only movie house dedicated to first-run independent and foreign film and repertory programming. BAMcafé, operated by Great Performances, offers a dinner menu prior to most BAM Howard Gilman Opera House evening performances, featuring varied light fare and bar service. BAMcafé also features an eclectic mix of live music for BAMcafé Live on Friday and Saturday nights with bar service and light dining available from 6pm.

Subway: 2, 3, 4, 5, Q, B to Atlantic Avenue – Barclays Center (2, 3, 4, 5 to Nevins St for Harvey Theater); D, N, R to Pacific Street; G to Fulton Street; C to Lafayette Avenue
Train: Long Island Railroad to Atlantic Terminal – Barclays Center
Bus: B25, B26, B41, B45, B52, B63, B67 all stop within three blocks of BAM
Car: Limited commercial parking lots are located near BAM. Visit BAM.org for information.

For ticket information, call BAM Ticket Services at 718.636.4100, or visit BAM.org.

###