

Kronos Quartet Goes Non-Stop

By Wesley Joost

Guardsman staff Writer

The Kronos Quartet made a continuous gliding movement from one tone one culture, to a new tone a new culture during their season opener at the Yerba Buena Center for the Arts.

The 28-year-old quartet poured their souls into the foundation of modern radical expressionism; using innovative chord sequences to construct endless combinations of world music. The globe-trotting program, titled *Recent Kronos*, harmonized the music of Eastern Europe, Mexico, Argentina, Africa, Cuba, Vietnam, Azerbaijan, and the Middle East, into an enthralling blend of musical life.

The show's opener, *Potassium*, by Michael Gordon, used portamenti, the formerly considered schmaltzy, expressive technique of sliding the finger across the strings, to repeat and expand upon musical phrases. Also in play was the organizational technique, *ostinato*, which is a constantly recurring melodic fragment. In fact, the show over all seems to suggest that *ostinato* has replaced twelve-tone music as the organizational tool for classical music in the 21st century.

Interestingly enough, *ostinato* is also the basis of jazz and rock music. "I think it's an important aspect," commented David Harrington, the Quartet's founder and lead violinist. Kronos Quartet's active multiculturalism involved the audience's mentality on a personal level. There was no need for explanations of the music in terms of theoretical reasoning. The real reasons for diversity are immediate to the ear.

Potassium opened with an obsessively repetitive distorted lament, segueing into a woozy take on Prokofiev-style sword clanking music and then back to the opening portamenti like extremely sharp fingernails scratching one's back.

Gordon confesses the piece is about nothing. However, the commitment of

the Kronos Quartet gives it, like everything they perform, profound gravity.

"La Muerte Chiquita" (the little dead girl) by Enrique Rangel is a Mexican pop salon bon bon. It is a wistful languorous waltz with muchos swooning portamenti. Kronos do for this piece, originally written for a rock band, what they did for Jimi Hendrix's *Purple Haze*, transforming pop to classical art.

"Doina", by Osvaldo Golijov, the third piece on the program was immediately seductive with ravishing glistening surfaces and a relentless exhausting take-no-prisoners gypsy finale.

Almost a charming MGM exoticism, *Tabú* sounds as if it could be performed by either Korla Pandit or Yma Sumac with equal success. This Afro-Cuban piece by Margarita Lecuona was played against a tape of Louis Conte's claves, maracas and congas

Vietnamese immigrant P.Q. Phan contributed three movements from his 10-movement work *An Duong Vuong*. "Submersion in Trust and Betrayal." The second movement successfully created a mournful atmosphere reflecting the composers' tragic childhood in Vietnam.

Phan says of his piece: "The complete work is an 'opera' for string quartet without voice. It is an opera because each member of the quartet takes a particular role throughout the work. The 'opera' utilizes elements from operatic traditions of Vietnam and those of Western cultures."

"Oasis" by Franghiz Ali-Zadeh begins with a sound loop of plip-popping raindrops playing tag with effervescent bursts of pizzicati. As the music proceeds unfortunately it's more like 12-tone music wearing a burnoose. Turkish percussionist Burhan Öcal stole the show while accompanying the Kronos on the concluding three numbers. First playing Silvestre Revueltas' Afro-Cuban Stravinsk-idolatry *Sensemayá*; and his own composition "Dance of Rhythms," -- a fiery update of Turkish traditional music. Sandwiched in was a 1000-year-old piece of Turkish classical music, which was somewhat stiff as begets its age but had the stately loping gait of a camel.

Not satisfied, Öcal, with hands moving with the inhuman speed of a hummingbird, wowed the crowd with a blistering virtuoso kick ass solo on the darbuka. Öcal and the Kronos left the crowd rhythmically pounding their feet for an encore, to which they were rewarded with another upbeat Klezmerish Turkish treat from the 18th century.

Kronos have spearheaded the move of classical music in a wonderful new direction and proved there is a market and genuine passion for the new music that is emerging.



Music Teacher Composes, Collaborates with Dancers

By Wesley Joost

Guardsman Staff Writer

City College Afro-Cuban music teacher Rebecca Mauléon will be having a free event on April 29 at 2 p.m. to kick-off her three-year residency at the Yerba Buena Center for the arts.

The event at the Yerba Buena Center's Forum building will feature children and seniors of the South Of Market community that Mauléon has been working with in music workshops.

"In addition to composing new works for my ensemble and various guest artists," says Mauléon, "I will be incorporating the work I do with the seniors and the kids into the performance, either via their poetry or spoken word. They will be performing the music I taught them. They will also be doing a lot of continuation work about music, instrument making and composition. It's multi-faceted."

Mauléon's residency will involve sitting in on department meetings of the diverse Yerba Buena Center staff. She says she will have connections to people in different disciplines including visual arts and dance. She's looking forward to collaborating with these new acquaintances but is focusing on the creation of new works.

"There will be a large culminating performance in the third year which is the big sha-bang I'm working on. I'm writing a big band suite, some choral pieces, some work with dancers and chamber orchestra. It'll be very expansive. Throughout the residency I'll be performing portions of the work in an informal setting so people can attend open rehearsals and preview parts of the concert," Mauléon said.

Her residency is part of the "Meet The Composer" series. There are only fourteen recipients of the grant in the entire country. There will be a meeting of the composers in New Orleans in a couple of months for a concert. Combined with her new full-time position at City College she can integrate the two jobs in a way that will benefit the school and city.

Mauléon will be teaching and performing with her ensemble at the South of Market Community Outreach Center for children and low-income senior citizens who live in the area, focusing on how to make music with basic instruments and encourage them to perform spontaneously. What the seniors and kids create in this program could become part of a later compositional piece, she says. The classes will be in a lecture-demonstration format and will be a major asset to the South of Market community.

Mauléon's concert at the Yerba Buena center is free, but tickets should still be reserved ahead of time. For more information, call Yerba Buena Center at 415-978-2700.

City College Upcoming Events

Fashion shows from 12-1 p.m. Spring/ Summer fashions: "Destination Escape" - May 10. "Silhouette" - May 15. "A Different Point of View" - April 19. "Jet Set" - April 26. Hosted by The Fashion Coordination Class of the CCSF Fashion Merchandising Program @ Student Cafeteria. **Thursday, April 26 in the Student Union, 7 - 9:30 p.m.** "Poetry for the People", Twenty-fifth year reunion reading. With Opal Palmer Adisa, Blackberri, Royal Edwards and Wendy Loomis of Copus. Open mike, music & refreshments **Theatre Shows in the Diego Rivera Playhouse** "West Side Story" - June 1, 2, 8, 9 @ 8 p.m. June 10 @ 2 pm "Sweeney Todd" - July 20, 21, 27, 28 @ 8 pm July 29 at 2 pm **Art Exhibits** "Expressions" - Reception will be April 18 at 2 p.m. Second Floor Lobby at Rosenberg Library **City Art Gallery** - Printmaking Faculty Exhibit 2001 Visual Arts Building until April 20 Monday - Friday, 10-3 p.m., Tuesday - Wednesday, 6-8 p.m.