

# A THOUSAND THOUGHTS

A LIVE DOCUMENTARY BY  
SAM GREEN AND KRONOS QUARTET



KRONOS PERFORMING ARTS ASSOCIATION  
commissioning & presentation opportunity



## A NEW LIVE-CINEMA PERFORMANCE PIECE THAT, THROUGH THE LENS OF KRONOS' PAST, PRESENT & FUTURE, EXPLORES THE MANY WAYS IN WHICH MUSIC CAN CHANGE THE WORLD

### INTRODUCTION

Oscar-nominated filmmaker **Sam Green** and Grammy-winning **Kronos Quartet** have teamed up to create ***A Thousand Thoughts: A Live Documentary by Sam Green and Kronos Quartet***. Drawing from Kronos' past, present, and future, this wildly creative multimedia experiment blends live music and narration with archival footage and filmed interviews with Kronos collaborators Philip Glass, Tanya Tagaq, Steve Reich, Wu Man, and Terry Riley. As Green tells the multi-decade and continent-spanning story of the groundbreaking string quartet, he crafts an important record and exploration of late 20th- and early 21st-century music. Transcending the typical live cinema event, *A Thousand Thoughts* quickly becomes a meditation on music itself—the act of listening to it closely, the experience of feeling it deeply, and the power that it has to change the world.

***A Thousand Thoughts* will premiere in early 2018, and the piece will tour in the 2018/19 Season as a part of Kronos' 45th anniversary. The portability and scalability of the production will enable *A Thousand Thoughts* to be presented at a wide range of performance, music, film, and multi-genre venues.**



## THE WORK

A recent grant recipient from the Sundance Documentary Fund, *A Thousand Thoughts* will be similar to Sam Green's past "live documentary" works: he will stand at stage right, narrating the Kronos story and cueing projected photos, videos, and sound bites from a laptop onto a screen, while Kronos is center stage playing a live score. Using this combination of concert, film, and lecture, Green will travel chronologically through different chapters and moments from Kronos' history, all the while maintaining editorial independence and critical distance.

The meta quality of this work—a live-cinema piece about Kronos as Kronos performs the soundtrack—will encourage audiences to reflect on the nature of liveness, presence, and the collective experience of art.

Green has assembled an impressive creative team for the project that includes award-winning editor Joe Bini, who is Werner Herzog's longtime editor, and cinematographer Kirsten Johnson, who shot *Citizenfour*, the recent Oscar-winning film about Edward Snowden, as well as *Fahrenheit 9/11* and many others.

As the first-ever documentary about the Kronos Quartet, *A Thousand Thoughts* is a truly experimental and multi-disciplinary experience that will broaden filmic definitions of what a documentary can be, and break ground in the performance world by bringing to it a heightened sense of cinematic craft.

Trailer: [vimeo.com/185535318](https://vimeo.com/185535318)

## FROM KRONOS

Kronos has a long tradition of experimenting with live performance and presenting new multimedia works, particularly pieces with visual elements including lighting design, film, and projected images. We have commissioned and produced many new staged works and performed them around the world. We have also made our recordings and/or new scores available for dance, theater, and film. Sam Green's *A Thousand Thoughts* will allow us to expand our work in this area to include interactive engagement with film in real time, and to realize the expressive possibilities inherent in live cinema, which Sam has uniquely developed into a vital and engaging form.

*A Thousand Thoughts* also presents a special opportunity to revisit our extensive body of work in a legacy context, while creating the kind of new and innovative audience experience that has always been at the core of our mission. It will be created and presented at a significant milestone—the 45th anniversary of Kronos.

From the very beginning, we have been committed to collaborating deeply with other creative artists such as composers and musicians – as well as those outside of music, including sculptors, physicists, visual artists, and social activists. We are enthusiastic about continuing our artistic partnership with Sam Green and are strongly committed to his concept for this work.



# THE COLLABORATORS

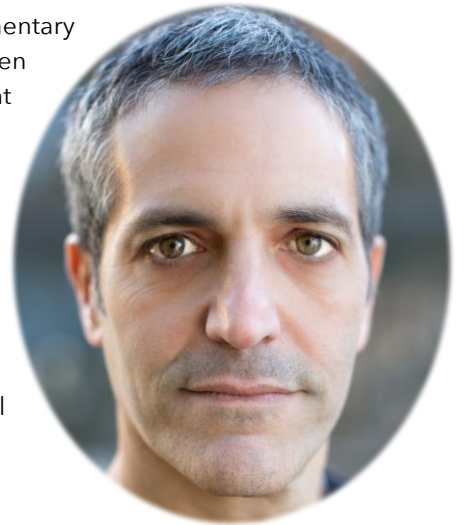
## FILMMAKER / DIRECTOR SAM GREEN

Sam Green is a New York-based documentary filmmaker. He received his Master's Degree in Journalism from University of California Berkeley, where he studied documentary with acclaimed filmmaker Marlon Riggs. Green's most recent projects are the "live documentaries" *The Measure of All Things* (2014), *The Love Song of R. Buckminster Fuller* (with Yo La Tengo) (2012), and *Utopia in Four Movements* (2010). With all of these works, Green narrates the film in-person while musicians perform a live soundtrack. His performance work has screened at venues such as the Barbican, the Kitchen, the TBA Festival, the Fusebox Festival, the Brighton Festival, and many others.

Green's 2004 feature-length film, the Academy Award-nominated documentary *The Weather Underground*, tells the story of a group of radical young women and men who tried to violently overthrow the United States government during the late 1960s and 70s. The film premiered at the Sundance Film Festival, was broadcast on PBS, included in the Whitney Biennial, and has screened widely around the world.

Green is also a prolific maker of short documentaries, including *The Rainbow Man/John 3:16; lot 63, grave c; Pie Fight '69* (directed with Christian Bruno); *N-Judah 5:30*; and *The Fabulous Stains: Behind the Movie* (directed with Sarah Jacobson). He has received grants from the Creative Capital, Rockefeller and Guggenheim Foundations, as well as the National Endowment for the Arts.

Website: [samgreen.to](http://samgreen.to)



## CRITICAL ACCLAIM FOR SAM GREEN

"A SINGULAR EXPERIENCE, AND A COLLECTIVE ONE, WITH THE POTENTIAL FOR HUMAN CONNECTION AND HUMAN ERROR."

—THE NEW YORK TIMES

"SAM GREEN HAS LONG TAKEN JOY AT UNPACKING UTOPIAN PROMISES OF THE PAST, MANY DELUDED, OTHERS INSPIRED, AND OFFERING THEM UP FOR RE-EVALUATION AND APPRECIATION."

—FANDOR

"THERE'S AN ENERGY IN THE ROOM YOU CAN'T CAPTURE IN A VIDEOTAPE, THAT'S TANGIBLE. I LIKE THAT."

—INDIEWIRE



# FROM SAM

“My roots are in cinema, and in many ways, this ‘live documentary’ form is a response to the fact that, increasingly, people are watching movies distractedly on laptops or smartphones. But rather than making a nostalgic gesture to preserve the theatrical cinema experience, I am remixing older forms and performative antecedents from film history (e.g., silent films with live music, the Benshi tradition, travelogues, the expanded cinema movement) to create something utterly contemporary – a form that sits at the intersection of disciplines and responds to this moment of great flux, upheaval, and possibility in the film and performance worlds.

**I am remixing forms to create something utterly contemporary — a form that sits at the intersection of disciplines and responds to this moment of great flux, upheaval, and possibility in the film and performance worlds.**

I’m deeply inspired by this project because the Kronos Quartet represents values and ideas that are dear to

me and also feel extremely important in the world today. There’s a quote from an interview I did with David Harrington that will

be central to the piece: ‘We have not created the bulletproof piece of music that a young child can wrap around herself or a grandparent can wrap around his family and keep them safe. But I do think it’s possible, and I spend every minute of my waking life trying to find that. That’s our

job!’ Kronos has been committed to progressive politics for 40 years – both through the ensemble’s cultural practices (their recent *Fifty for the Future* project deliberately commissioning an equal number of works from men and women) and also through explicitly exploring political themes in their projects (the AIDS-themed *All the Rage* album, for example). At its heart, *A Thousand Thoughts* will ask profound questions about the power of art, music, and beauty to change the world.

Additionally, I see the form of *A Thousand Thoughts*, with its emphasis on ephemerality and the collective experience, as deeply political; this piece takes inspiration from a quote by my friend the writer Rebecca Solnit: ‘I still think the revolution is to make the world safe for poetry, meandering, for the frail and vulnerable, the rare and obscure, the impractical and local and small.’”



Sam Green and Kirsten Johnson interview Fodé Lassana Diabaté.



Tanya Tagaq films her interview for *A Thousand Thoughts*.

# KRONOS QUARTET

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 re-imagining the string quartet experience. As one of the world's most celebrated and influential ensembles, Kronos has performed thousands of concerts, released more than 60 recordings, collaborated with many of the world's most intriguing and accomplished composers and performers, and commissioned more than 900 works and arrangements for string quartet. The Grammy-winning quartet has also received the Polar Music and Avery Fisher Prizes.

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; Poland's Henryk Górecki; and Serbia's Aleksandra Vrebalov. Additional collaborators have included Chinese pipa virtuoso Wu Man, performance artist Laurie Anderson, Azeri vocalist Alim Qasimov, Inuit throat singer Tanya Tagaq, Beatles legend Paul McCartney, and rockers Tom Waits, Amon Tobin, and The National.



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 *Nuevo* (2002), a Grammy- and Latin Grammy-nominated celebration of Mexican culture; and the 2004 Grammy winner, Alban Berg's *Lyric Suite*. Kronos' most recent release is *One Earth, One People, One Love: Kronos Plays Terry Riley* (2015), a five-CD retrospective boxed set.

With a staff of 12 based in San Francisco, the non-profit Kronos Performing Arts Association (KPAA) manages all aspects of Kronos' work, including Kronos' *Fifty for the Future* education initiative, the commissioning of new works, concert tours and home-season performances, education programs, and its presenting program, KRONOS PRESENTS.

Website: [kronosquartet.org](http://kronosquartet.org)

## CRITICAL ACCLAIM FOR KRONOS QUARTET

"KRONOS CAN LEGITIMATELY CLAIM TO HAVE UPENDED THE WORLD OF THE CLASSICAL STRING QUARTET, INTRODUCING THEATRICALITY, VIGOR AND ARTISTIC DARING INTO A STAID AND OFTEN PREDICTABLE MILIEU."

—SAN FRANCISCO CHRONICLE

"MORE SOPHISTICATED THAN 'ROCK,' LESS STODGY THAN 'CLASSICAL,'  
THOUGH THEY CLEARLY AREN'T STRANGERS TO EITHER."

—ROLLING STONE

"KRONOS HAS LED AND CONTINUES TO LEAD WHAT SURELY MUST BE THE  
LONGEST UNENDING REVOLUTION BY ANY ENSEMBLE EVER IN MUSIC HISTORY."

—LOS ANGELES TIMES

## FILM EDITOR

# JOE BINI

Joe Bini is an American film editor who has worked primarily on European films. He is Werner Herzog's longtime editor, working on numerous documentaries and feature films including: *Little Dieter Needs to Fly* (1997), *Invincible* (2001), *Grizzly Man* (2005), *Rescue Dawn* (2007) and *Encounters at the End of the World* (2007), which was nominated for the Academy Award for Best Documentary Feature. Bini also edited Nick Broomfield's documentary *The Grim Sleeper* (2014). His additional credits include: *We Need to Talk About Kevin* (2011) and *Roman Polanski: Wanted and Desired* (2008).

## CINEMATOGRAPHER

# KIRSTEN JOHNSON

Kirsten Johnson is one of the most notable cinematographers working in documentary cinema today, having shot *Citizenfour* (2014), *Happy Valley* (2014), *Fahrenheit 9/11* (2004), *The Oath* (2010), *The Invisible War* (2012) and dozens of other groundbreaking documentaries. With her new visually radical memoir *Cameraperson* (2016), Johnson presents an extraordinary and deeply poetic film of her own, drawing on the remarkable and varied footage that she has shot and reframing it in ways that illuminate moments and situations that have personally affected her.

## CONFIRMED COMMISSIONING PARTNERS (TO DATE)

The Arts Center at NYU Abu Dhabi  
Barbican  
Center for the Art of Performance at UCLA  
Krannert Center for the Performing Arts at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign  
MASSMoCA  
Wexner Center for the Arts at The Ohio State University  
through its Wexner Center Artist Residency Award program

## CONFIRMED FUNDERS (TO DATE)

The Sundance Documentary Fund  
The DrumStick Fund  
Bay Area Video Coalition  
The Emily Harvey Foundation  
Genuine Article Pictures  
Andrea Lunsford

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# KRONOSQUARTET

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