

THREE BONES CONCERT

A Musical Revolution Comes Alive

By Isaac Hernández de Lipa / VOICE

THREE BONES CONCERT, FEATURING THE KRONOS QUARTET, will bring their new multi-sensory experience, through music, storytelling, vintage recordings, video elements, and visual arts to UC Santa Barbara's Campbell Hall, Saturday May 2nd, as part of Arts & Lectures.

Named after the three tiny bones in the ear that amplify our life's experiences, the Three Bones concert is a musical triptych that amplifies the histories of Indigenous, Gullah-Geechee, and Chinese American communities in the United States, with the occasion of the 250th anniversary of the United States.

The first segment, Ground features White Mountain Apache violinist and composer Laura Ortman, and takes us through time with Native compositions that go from their first recordings in 1890 to today.

Featuring Grammy winning percussionist Quentin Baxter and celebrating the Gullah Geechee, At the Sea Islands, refers to an archipelago in South Carolina and Northern Florida, where West and Central African people of different cultures and languages were enslaved and created a community of many combined cultures. It's



Photo by Lenny Gonzalez
Wu Man performs with the Kronos Quartet

at the Sea Islands where Harriet Tubman and 150 Union African American soldiers liberated 800 enslaved people in the Combahee River Raid of 1863.

The research by David Lei on five historic Chinese American civil rights cases that have improved the rights of all Americans, including birth citizenship, inspired the last piece, Beyond the Golden Gate, featuring pipa virtuoso Wu Man and other musical guests, plus a very old vinyl recording of a Chinese Cantonese opera and newly composed music by both Wu Man and Dai Wei.

The Kronos Quartet features founding member David Harrington, Violin, as well as Gabriela Diaz, Violin, Ayane Kozasa, Viola, and Paul Wiancko, Cello.

For tickets (\$15-\$58) visit artsandlectures.ucsb.edu

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Interview with Wu Man

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SOME MAY ASSOCIATE THE PIPA, similar to a lute, to traditional Chinese music. But when Grammy-nominated Wu Man (Hangzhou, China, 1963) gets her hands on the 31-fret rosewood instrument, the world transforms around her.

Wu Man, who has delighted audiences in Santa Barbara with both the Silk Road Ensemble and the DoosTrio, now returns with the San Francisco Kronos Quartet, with which she has collaborated since 1992. She spoke to VOICE about history, music and Jimi Hendrix.

VOICE: When you performed Tan Dun's Ghost Opera with Kronos in Beijing, your teacher Lin Shichen said that he liked it, but he didn't understand it. Is it important to understand music?



Photo by Gary Payne

Wu Man: First of all, you enjoy it. You can study later, check the background, the composer, the style, the instrument...

VOICE: What about your upcoming Kronos Three Bones concert?

Wu Man: It's very special to me, because it's not a normal concert. It has a combination of storytelling, visual arts, staging, a video component... For my part, there are three stories about Chinese American immigrants in the early 20th century, stories people probably forgot. For me as a new immigrant, I never knew them. And we have mainly Chinese music, and a very old vinyl recording David Harrington found in the Library Congress, which we used to compose a new piece. And also, I have my own piece.

VOICE: You have a lot of fun with Kronos.

Wu Man: Always. Kronos is such a creative group. I really enjoy playing with them. We

always have some crazy ideas, besides the music.

VOICE: Some of your playing sounds like flamenco.

Wu Man: The strumming is very similar. Music actually travels, it's fascinating.

VOICE: And sometimes you sound like Jimi Hendrix.

Wu Man: When I moved to the U.S. in the early 90s, I played some concerts in New York. Afterwards, an audience member said, 'Wow, you sound like Jimi Hendrix.' And I had no idea who he was at that time. Then, I saw a video online, and of course I did know, 'Oh, that's Jimi Hendrix!' I really admire him. I feel so honored that people mention my dramatic style playing related to Hendrix.

VOICE: What other influences have you had?

Wu Man: Working with Kronos in the early 90s is definitely the turning point for my musical career because my training is from a conservatory, based on Chinese traditional background. Kronos totally opened a window for me to go with new music. I've composed a couple of pieces for Kronos, including my first string quartet piece for 50 for the Future, which is for young generations to play all kinds of music.

VOICE: What does your name mean?

Wu Man: The Chinese character pronounced "M-an" conveys connotations of "savagery" and "coarseness"; yet, my surname, "Wu," signifies negation: "nothing," "absence," or "not." This creates a striking contrast with my given name, symbolizing a diametrically opposite set of qualities—namely, "civilization," or the absence of savagery. Gentle, courteous, and benevolent.

VOICE: In this time of savage rhetoric against immigrants, why is this concert important?

Wu Man: This is a great time to review the history, to deeply understand the culture and people. One country is not only one kind of person. Nothing comes from one place. Even the music. Even my instrument. It came from Persia two thousand years ago. It's not Chinese-invented. I think it is important, not only music, but the history, especially for the younger generation.

VOICE: Are you more excited about playing at the UC Santa Barbara Campbell Hall or the Carnegie Hall?

Wu Man: Santa Barbara. Definitely. Always Santa Barbara. It's my second California home for concerts. I love Santa Barbara.