

Distinguished Alumni Series

2011–12 Season
280th Concert

Thursday 19 January 2012
Dalton Center Recital Hall
7:30 p.m.

KONTRAS STRING QUARTET

Dmitri Pogorelov, Violin
Francois Henkins, Violin
Ai Ishida, Viola
Jean Hatmaker, Cello

Franz Schubert
1797–1828

String Quartet in C Minor D. 703 (“Quartettsatz”)

Mokale Koapeng
b. 1963

Komeng

Joe Hisaishi
b. 1950

Quartet G-Moll

Igor Stravinsky
1882–1971

3 Pieces for String Quartet
I. Number 1

Jay Greenberg
b. 1991

Blues (2011)

Heitor Villa-Lobos
1887–1959

String Quartet Number 5
I. Poco Andantino – Un poco vivo – Tempo primo – Lento –
Allegro vivace – Vivo – Presto
II. Vivo e energico – Lento – Tempo primo – Molto lento
III. Andantino – Tempo giusto e ben ritmato – Adagio –
Andantino
IV. Allegro

intermission



Ludwig van Beethoven
1770–1827

String Quartet Number 7 in F Major Opus 59, Number 1

- I. Allegro
- II. Allegro vivace e sempre scherzando
- III. Adagio molto e mesto
- IV. Thème russe: Allegro

Astor Piazzolla
1921–1992

Four for Tango

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Lauded as a “tightly crafted and beautiful instrument,” the KONTRAS STRING QUARTET, formed by violinist Francois Henkins, a student of Renata Artman Knific and alumnus of the WMU School of Music, is rapidly becoming one of the most vibrant young string quartets on the scene. Kontras began its professional touring career in 2009 and has been garnering acclaim ever since. The quartet is all the more unique in that its members, violinists Dmitri Pogorelov and Francois Henkins, violist Ai Ishida, and cellist Jean Hatmaker, hail from four different parts of the world.

The quartet is currently in the second year of its tenure as the Hickory Metro Resident Quartet with the Western Piedmont Symphony in Hickory, N.C. Kontras competed with other seasoned string quartets from across the country to win the residency, which was established in conjunction with Chamber Music America in 1999. As the focal point of their residency, Kontras presents a series of chamber music concerts, sponsored by the Friends of the Quartet, throughout the season. The members also serve as principals of the orchestra while in residence.

In addition to offering fresh interpretations of the established string quartet canon, the Kontras Quartet is a firm advocate of new and unfamiliar compositions from each of their native countries, Russia, South Africa, Japan, and the U.S. As such, the quartet presents engaging pre-concert conversations about the background and context of its music to stimulate a deeper understanding of its programs. The quartet’s 2011–12 season includes appearances at numerous festivals and universities throughout the United States, as well as a special collaborative project featuring Haydn’s *The Seven Last Words of Christ*.

With dozens of performances to its name every season, Kontras is passionate about reaching people of diverse backgrounds through music and cultivating enthusiasm for music in people of all ages, and has been awarded grants to support their outreach activities in non-traditional venues. They have spent much time developing a series of specially designed educational arts programs for varied settings such as colleges, retirement homes, universities, hospitals and elementary schools. The quartet is very active in communities around North Carolina, performing more than 70 community concerts each year as a part of their residency.

Members of the Kontras Quartet are sought after as teachers, chamber music mentors, and orchestral coaches. They are currently on faculty at Lenoir-Rhyne University in Hickory and the NewArt School in Newton, and they mentor the young musicians of the Western Piedmont Youth Symphony through sectional coachings and masterclasses. Kontras has also worked with young audiences in Illinois, Michigan, Florida, Indiana, and Virginia.

Kontras, which means “contrasts” in violinist Francois Henkins’ native Afrikaans language, debuted in Chicago after the four musicians met while performing in the Civic Orchestra of Chicago. The quartet’s members hold graduate degrees in performance from DePaul University, Indiana University, the Tokyo National University of Fine Arts and Music, and the Chicago College of Performing Arts. Their mentors include the Vermeer Quartet; Dr. Cliff Colnot, the principal conductor of the Civic Orchestra of Chicago and the Chicago Symphony Orchestra’s contemporary MusicNOW series; renowned violinist Ilya Kaler; and members of the Emerson String Quartet.