Guest Artist Recital

2017–2018 Season
301st Concert
Saturday 27 January 2018
Dalton Center Lecture Hall
7:30 p.m.

KONTRAS QUARTET
Dmitri Pogorelov, Violin
François Henkins, Violin
Ben Weber, Viola
Jean Hatmaker, Cello

Mark O’Connor
b. 1961

String Quartet Number 3 (“Old Time”)
I. Aggressive with Precision
II. Waltz
III. Driving Rhythm, Aggressive with Precision
IV. Spirited, Joyful

brief pause

Piotr Tchaikovsky
1840–1893

String Quartet Number 1 in D Major Opus 11
I. Moderato e simplice
II. Andante cantabile
III. Scherzo: Allegro non tanto e con fuoco
IV. Finale: Allegro giusto

Building emergencies will be indicated by flashing lights and spoken announcement within the seating area. If the notification is for fire, please exit the building immediately. The tornado safe area in Dalton Center is along the lockers in the brick hallway as you exit. In any emergency, walk—do not run—to the nearest exit. Please turn off all cell phones and other electronic devices during the performance. Because of legal issues, any video or audio recording of this performance is forbidden without prior consent from the School of Music. Thank you for your cooperation.
Admired for their “superlative artistry” (CVNC Arts Journal), the Kontras Quartet has established an international following for their vibrant and nuanced performances. The “superb Chicago-based ensemble” (Gramophone Magazine) has been described as “a tightly crafted and beautiful instrument” (CVNC Arts Journal) and has been lauded for their “crisp precision” (Palm Beach Daily News) and “enjoyable musical personality” (Fanfare Magazine). Kontras means contrasts in the Afrikaans language - fitting for a string ensemble whose colorful repertoire spans centuries, genres, and continents.

The Kontras Quartet’s recent engagements include international tours of South Africa and Switzerland; broadcasts on classical radio stations nationwide (including Performance Today and a three month residency with Chicago's WFMT 98.7 fm); performances at Chicago's Symphony Center and the National Gallery of Art in Washington D.C.; television appearances on NBC and PBS; and sold out concerts in Telluride, Salt Lake City, Raleigh and Arizona. Kontras is looking forward to the spring of 2018, when they, together with saxophone great Branford Marsalis, are slated to give the world premiere of Dan Visconti's quintet for string quartet and saxophone, a work that the Quartet co-commissioned with San Diego's Art of Elan.

Kontras is currently in its third year as the Quartet in Residence at Western Michigan University. The group has also continued its work in the Chicago Public Schools with the support of a grant from the Boeing Company. Outside of the Chicago area, Kontras has made a significant educational impact in North Carolina, bringing over 200 innovative and interactive outreach programs to 45,000 students.

The Kontras Quartet records for MSR Classics and have released three critically acclaimed albums. The first, Origins, features new and lesser-known works from the quartet’s home countries, including the world premiere recording of Dan Visconti’s Ramshackle Songs. The recording was commended by Gramophone Magazine for the quartet’s “scrupulous shading and control”. The second, Lucid Dreamer, features a septet that Kontras commissioned in 2013 with a generous Chamber Music America-awarded grant. The work treads the line between classical music and American folk and invigorates Kontras' ongoing collaboration with the esteemed Kruger Brothers trio, as does their 2017 release, the Roan Mountain Suite.

Formed while the group’s members were string principals in the Civic Orchestra of Chicago, the Kontras Quartet began pursuing a professional career in 2009. Kontras enjoyed immediate recognition, holding their own against seasoned string quartets from around the country to win a four-year chamber music residency with the Western Piedmont Symphony in North Carolina, a full-time position established through Chamber Music America’s Residency Partnership Program. The quartet has received continued training with the Vermeer Quartet and Juilliard String Quartet.