

74TH SEASON OF CONCERTS

DECEMBER 6, 2015 • NATIONAL GALLERY OF ART





Photo by Deanna Rose

PROGRAM

3:30 • West Building, West Garden Court

Mark O'Connor, fiddle

Cia Cherryholmes, banjo and vocals

Forrest O'Connor, mandolin and vocals

Kate Lee, violin and vocals

Maggie O'Connor, fiddle

Joe Smart, guitar

Michael Rinne, bass

An Appalachian Christmas

The program will be announced from the stage.

The Musicians

Mark O'Connor started his musical career as a prodigy, apprenticing with folk fiddler extraordinaire, Benny Thomasson, and Stéphane Grappelli, the genius of the jazz fiddle. Mark quickly developed into a master, composing such instant classics as "Appalachia Waltz," leading the *New York Times* to call his rise "one of the most spectacular journeys in recent American music," and the *Los Angeles Times* to describe him as "one of the most talented and imaginative artists working in music — any music — today."

O'Connor has won two Grammy awards, seven national fiddle titles, two national guitar titles, one world mandolin title, and six Musician of the Year awards from the Country Music Association. He has played on more than five hundred albums, recording with Paul Simon, James Taylor, and Dolly Parton, not to mention his sensational collaborations with Yo-Yo Ma, Chris Thile, Bela Fleck, and Edgar Meyer.

The touring musicians with Mark O'Connor are substantial artists in their own right. Singer and fiddler Carrie Rodriguez has toured extensively with Bill Frisell; Cia Cherryholmes was the lead singer and banjoist in the hit bluegrass band *Cherryholmes*; singer and mandolinist Forrest O'Connor is touring with his group *Wisewater*; Joe Smart is a two-time National Flatpick Guitar Champion; violinist Maggie O'Connor tours regularly with her husband Mark O'Connor, performing violin duos; and bassist Michael Rinne regularly performs with Rodney Crowell.

This is the fifth year these performers are touring with *An Appalachian Christmas*. The ensemble has a dynamic energy on stage that shares their individual expertise as artists in the most delightful and musically satisfying way.

Program Notes

Grammy-winning composer and violinist Mark O'Connor has created several arrangements of Christmas classics and fashions a wondrous mixture of both instrumental and vocal music in bluegrass and other American musical genres. Concertgoers are treated to fresh takes on traditional songs with a few original compositions included. His renditions are playful and joyous, but can be strikingly earnest too.

O'Connor's *An Appalachian Christmas* (2011) reached the #1 ranking on Billboard's Bluegrass Album charts and has been in the top five each year since. Hailed by critics from the *Wall Street Journal*, the *New York Times*, and the *Los Angeles Times* as a top-ten album of the holiday season, it has become a perennial classic Christmas recording.

O'Connor says, "Appalachia is the original melting pot of our country featuring more diverse styles of American music than just about anywhere. This theme makes for what is a trilogy of my Appalachia recordings now: *Appalachia Waltz*, *Appalachian Journey*, and *An Appalachian Christmas*. My album features well-known carols, as well as several Appalachian-themed songs about a beloved hunting dog and passing a fiddle down through the generations. It also offers a new version of *Appalachia Waltz* with classical guitarist Sharon Isbin. A few of my favorite Christmas centerpieces for the album include Renée Fleming's soprano embraced by a mountain orchestra and fiddle solo, as well as the jazzy style of Jane Monheit with an all-acoustic string band."

Mark O'Connor — *An Appalachian Christmas*

For Mr. O'Connor's downloadable sheet music and recordings on his own OMAC Records label, including the critically acclaimed *An Appalachian Christmas*, featuring Renée Fleming, James Taylor, Jane Monheit, Steve Wariner, Alison Krauss, Yo-Yo Ma, Sharon Isbin, and Chris Thile, please visit www.markoconnor.com. For information regarding the O'Connor Method for violin and strings as well as summer string camps, please visit www.oconnormethod.com. Mark O'Connor — *An Appalachian Christmas* appears by arrangement with Cadenza Artists.

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The Seventy-Fourth Season of The William Nelson Cromwell and F. Lamot Belin Upcoming Concerts

Howard University's Afro Blue
Community Caroling
December 12, Saturday, 1:30 and 2:30
West Building Rotunda

DC Youth Orchestra
Community Caroling
December 13, Sunday, 1:30 and 2:30
West Building, East Garden Court

Trio Sefardi
Five Celebrations
December 13, Sunday, 3:30
West Building, West Garden Court

Marriotts Ridge High School Madrigals
Community Caroling
December 19, Saturday, 1:30 and 2:30
West Building Rotunda

General Information

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The use of cameras or recording equipment during the performance is not allowed. Please be sure that all portable electronic devices are turned off.

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