



# 75TH SEASON OF CONCERTS

FEBRUARY 19, 2017 • NATIONAL GALLERY OF ART



# PROGRAM



Kerry James Marshall, *Great America*, 1994, National Gallery of Art, Washington,  
Gift of the Collectors Committee

## 3:30 • West Building, West Garden Court

A Far Cry with Roomful of Teeth

*Music in Common Time*

Sergei Prokofiev (1891–1953)  
*Visions Fugitives*

Ted Hearne (b. 1982)  
Selections from *Coloring Book*

Intermission

Ted Hearne  
Selections from *Law of Mosaics*

Caroline Shaw (b. 1982)  
*Music in Common Time*

## The Musicians

A Far Cry stands at the forefront of an exciting new generation in classical music. According to the *New York Times*, the self-conducted orchestra "brims with personality or, better, personalities, many and varied." A Far Cry was founded in 2007 by a tightly knit collective of seventeen young professional musicians, and since the beginning has fostered those personalities. A Far Cry has developed an innovative process where decisions are made collectively and leadership rotates among the "Criers." For each piece, the members elect a group of principals, and these five musicians guide the rehearsal process and shape the interpretation. Since each program includes multiple works, this multiplicity of leaders adds tremendous musical variety to the concerts.

A Far Cry's omnivorous approach has led the group to collaborations with artists such as Yo-Yo Ma, Jake Shimabukuro, Urbanity Dance, and Roomful of Teeth. By expanding the boundaries of orchestral repertoire and experimenting with the ways music is prepared, performed, and experienced, A Far Cry has been embraced throughout the world with hundreds of performances coast to coast and across the globe. In 2014, A Far Cry launched its in-house label, Crier Records, with the album *Dreams and Prayers*, which received critical acclaim and a Grammy nomination. The second release, *Law of Mosaics*, followed in November 2014 and has also garnered much critical attention, including many 2014 Top-10 lists, notably from *New Yorker* music critic Alex Ross and WQXR's Q2 Music, which named A Far Cry as one of the "Imagination-Grabbing, Trailblazing Artists of 2014."

The Criers are proud to call Boston home, and maintain strong roots in the city, rehearsing at their storefront music center in Jamaica Plain and fulfilling the role of Chamber Orchestra in Residence at the Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum. Collaborating with local students through an educational partnership with the New England Conservatory, A Far Cry aims to pass on the spirit of collaboratively empowered music to the next generation.

### Violin

Alex Fortes  
Angelia Cho  
Annie Rabbat  
Ari Isaacman-Beck  
Jae Cosmos Lee  
Jesse Irons  
Miki-Sophia Cloud  
Robyn Bollinger  
Zenas Hsu

### Viola

Frank Shaw  
Jason Fisher  
Rimbo Wong  
Sarah Darling

### Cello

Loewi Lin  
Michael Unterman  
Rafael Popper-Keizer  
  
Bass

Erik Higgins  
Karl Doty

Roomful of Teeth is a Grammy-winning vocal project dedicated to reimagining the expressive potential of the human voice. Through study with masters from vocal traditions the world over, the eight-voice ensemble continually expands its vocabulary of singing techniques and, through an ongoing commissioning process, forges a new repertoire without borders.

Founded in 2009 by Brad Wells, Roomful of Teeth gathers annually at the Massachusetts Museum of Contemporary Art in North Adams, Massachusetts, where they've studied with some of the world's top performers and teachers in Tuvan throat singing, yodeling, Broadway belting, Inuit throat singing, Korean P'ansori, Georgian singing, Sardinian cantu a tenore, Hindustani music, Persian classical singing, and Death Metal singing. Commissioned composers include Rinde Eckert, Fred Hersch, Merrill Garbus (of tUnE-yArDs), William Brittelle, Toby Twining, Missy Mazzoli, Julia Wolfe, Ted Hearne, and Ambrose Akinmusire, among many others.

Projects in 2016 - 2017 include *The Colorado*, a music-driven documentary film that explores water, land, and survival in the Colorado River Basin (featuring former Kronos Quartet cellist Jeffrey Zeigler and Wilco's Glenn Kotche); collaborations with A Far Cry and Nick Zammuto of The Books; appearances at new music festivals in the United States, Canada, and Sweden; and partnerships with nearly two dozen higher-education institutions across the country.

### Soprano

Estelí Gomez  
Martha Cluver

### Alto

Eliza Bagg  
Virginia Warnken

### Tenor

Steven Bradshaw

### Baritone

Thann Scoggin  
Thomas McCargar

### Bass

Cameron Beauchamp

## Program Notes

### Visions Fugitives

When reflecting on the works of Prokofiev, the pieces that generally come to mind are works of power and angularity, mixed with stylish classical-era sophistication and flourish. Less known are the often more impressionistic miniature pieces for piano, the *Visions Fugitives*, so named after a poet friend heard them and penned the line, "In every fleeting vision I see worlds...." These works seem to be indebted somewhat to the sound worlds of Debussy, Scriabin, and in their brevity and charm, Schumann's miniatures.

Written in two years from 1915 to 1917, these twenty "movements" can be played in small groups, and Prokofiev would sometimes use them as encores. He recorded them in 1935, and, to date, you can listen to those recordings on YouTube. Here, the piano pieces are arranged for strings, providing a way to "deconstruct" the lines enough to find room to stand in the midst of the moving parts. *Program notes by Kathryn Bacasmot*

### Coloring Book

They will never, so long as their whiteness puts so sinister a distance between themselves and their own experience and the experience of others, feel themselves sufficiently human, *sufficiently worthwhile*, to become responsible for themselves, their leaders, their country, their children, or their fate.

— James Baldwin, from "An Open Letter to My Sister, Angela Y. Davis" (1970)

Ted Hearne's *Coloring Book* sets the words of three Black American writers of different generations — Zora Neale Hurston, James Baldwin, and Claudia Rankine. Hearne sets these texts, each addressing the idea of identity, in surprising and personal ways, using stylistic juxtaposition to explore the boundaries separating the authors' conception of cultural identity from his own, and to better understand the differences between them.

*Coloring Book* was commissioned with generous support from the Barlow Endowment for Music Composition. *Program notes by Ted Hearne*

### I. The game of keeping

[*The position of my white neighbor is much more difficult.*]

No brown specter pulls up a chair beside me when I sit down to eat.

No dark ghost thrusts its leg against mine in bed.

[*The game of keeping what one has is never so exciting as the game of getting.*]

— Zora Neale Hurston "How it feels to be colored me" (1928)

### II. You are not the guy

And you are not the guy and still you fit the description because there is only one guy who is always the guy fitting the description.

Each time it begins in the same way, it doesn't begin the same way, each time it begins it's the same. Flashes, a sired, the stretched-out roar —

And you are not the guy and still you fit the description  
— roar —

still you fit the description because there is only one guy who is always the guy fitting the description.

This is what it looks like. You know this is wrong. This is not what it looks like. You need to be quiet. This is wrong. You need to close your mouth now. This is what it looks like. You can't drive yourself sane. You are not the guy.

And you are not the guy and still you fit the description because there is only one guy who is always the guy fitting the description. Get on the ground now. Then I just knew.

Yes officer rolled around on my tongue, which grew out of a bell that could never ring because its emergency was a tolling I was meant to swallow.

— Claudia Rankine from *Citizen* (2014)

### IV. Letter to my father

Him. He

He has only heard what I

I felt. He

He is far away but I

I see him.

Him but dimly across the ocean and the continent that have fallen between us.

Us. He

He is so pale with his whiteness then and I

I am so colored.

Music. The great blobs of purple and red emotion have not touched him.

He is so pale with his whiteness then and I

I am so colored.

— Zora Neale Huston from "How it feels to be colored me" (1928)

## **Law of Mosaics**

"Thomas Jefferson went through the New Testament and removed all the miracles, leaving only the teachings."

"Meaning is a matter of adjacent data."

"The law of mosaics: how to deal with parts in the absence of wholes."

These passages, along with many others, are appropriated from a variety of sources and arranged by David Shields into his 2010 book, *Reality Hunger: A Manifesto*. It is a patchwork treatise on art and digital culture, and is an inspiration for *Law of Mosaics*, a new thirty-minute piece for A Far Cry.

The musical material from the first movement, Excerpts from the middle of something, is lush and climactic but it is also a fish out of water, removed from surrounding music that might help it be better contextualized. It could follow a tense build-up, or precede a climax and resolution, but instead we hear it repeated and revised. As the material circles in on itself, it begins to make sense on its own, but never really "goes" anywhere.

The second movement, Palindrome for Andrew Norman, is constructed entirely of samples lifted from other pieces of music. Each plays an important or climactic role in the piece from which it is lifted, but is used here as a single building block in the construction of a symmetrical (and rather arbitrary) formal structure: the palindrome. Each sample is altered from its original composition in some way: it may appear backwards, or revoiced, or as a canon with itself, but an element of its essential character is always preserved.

Andrew Norman is a contemporary composer from New York whose 2010 string trio *The Companion Guide to Rome* is heard among the many snippets of source material in this movement.

In some way, the rich history of works written for the string orchestra informs and influences every performance by every individual string orchestra active today, whether they choose to perform those works or not. Climactic moments from *Adagio for Strings* and *The Four Seasons*, slowed down and layered on top of one another, explores what can happen when two "staples" of the repertoire (likely to be found on a Best Classical Hits CD) are stretched out and mashed up.

The fourth movement, Beats, is driven by noise, punk, and electronic music more than classical music influences. A simple and clear form is filled with music that plays with the space between pitch and non-pitched sound.

Climactic moments from movement three, three times as slow as before is simply a reframing of music you have already heard. The warp and woof refers to the lengthwise (warp) and crosswise (woof) threads that together create the texture and foundation of a woven fabric. It is a fitting end for a piece that imagines the framing of musical content to be as integral to the structure of a work as the way that content is framed. *Program notes by Ted Hearne*

## **Music in Common Time**

From the beginning, *Music in Common Time* was a dream project. Not just for the prospect of bringing together some of my favorite musical colleagues from different worlds, but also for the sonic possibilities of combining A Far Cry's rich string sound with Roomful of Teeth's varied vocal timbres. The music begins with a D-major chord unraveling into arpeggiating strings and humming voices, eventually settling into a darker harmonic world. The heart of the piece, about halfway through, is a continuously rising harmonic sequence that pivots toward and away from expectation. What follows is a quiet reflection on the inevitable passing of time and perhaps the ephemerality of music. *Program notes by Caroline Shaw*

**Upcoming Events of the Seventy-Fifth Season of The William Nelson Cromwell and F. Lammot Belin Concerts**

Works by Jeffrey Mumford  
“Washingtonians on Wednesdays”  
“*in soft echoes...a world awaits*”:  
*music for strings and piano*  
February 22, 12:10  
West Building, West Garden Court

New York Opera Society  
*American Inspiration, Norwegian Innovation*  
Program in collaboration with the  
Norwegian Embassy  
February 26, 3:30  
West Building, West Garden Court

Carmen Balthrop, soprano  
José Cáceres, piano  
“Washingtonians on Wednesdays”  
Music by David DiChiera, Leslie Adams,  
Charles Davidson, and others  
March 1, 12:10  
West Building, West Garden Court

Eya  
Florence: *The Cultural Crucible*  
Presented in honor of  
*Della Robbia: Sculpting with Color in Renaissance Florence*  
March 4, 12:00 and 2:00  
West Building, West Garden Court

Ji, piano  
March 5, 3:30  
West Building, West Garden Court

**General Information**

Admission to the National Gallery of Art and all of its programs is free of charge, except as noted.

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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