The program will be announced from the stage and will include the following works composed by Jens Kruger, as well as other songs from the Kruger Brothers' repertoire.

*Roan Mountain Suite*
*Lucid Dreamer (commissioned by the Kontras Quartet)*
*Appalachian Concerto*

Presented in honor of *East of the Mississippi: Nineteenth-Century American Landscape Photography*
The Kontras Quartet’s recent and upcoming performances include multiple broadcasts on classical radio stations nationwide, including *Performance Today* and *Concierto* on NPR; concerts at Chicago’s Symphony Center, the Farnsworth House, and the Juilliard School; television appearances on NBC and PBS; regular appearances on concert series throughout the Midwest and Southeast; and sold-out performances at the Telluride, International Bluegrass Music Association, and MerleFest festivals.

Kontras enjoys educational work of all kinds, and has been the Professional Quartet in Residence at Western Michigan University for two years. In addition to the ensemble’s concert schedule, it holds teaching residencies at Elmhurst College and Appalachian State University. The musicians will also continue their 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 40,000 students.

Formed while the group’s members were string principals in the Civic Orchestra of Chicago, the 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.

**Program Notes**

**Roan Mountain Suite**

The Kruger Brothers are joined by the Kontras Quartet for a very special original work, commissioned to honor the region, history, and legacy of Tennessee’s Roan Mountain.

The *Roan Mountain Suite* honors the 50th anniversary of the inaugural meeting to conserve the Roan, an effort initiated by the late Stanley A. Murray, husband of patron Judy Murray of Kingsport, Tennessee. Dedicated to the memory of Stanley A. Murray (1923–1990), the *Roan Mountain Suite* is a musical experience honoring the treasured landscape of the region.

Stan Murray was chairman of the Appalachian Trail Conference for fourteen years and a visionary and champion of the Appalachian National Scenic Trail and Highlands of Roan. He founded the Southern Appalachian Highlands Conservancy. The *Roan Mountain Suite* is a new example of the Kruger Brothers’ brilliant ability to enlist the illustrative power of music to tell a story in eloquent detail.

“Roan Mountain resonates in a deep and personal way with all those who visit it, and by the same token, the Kruger Brothers’ music reaches into the hearts and souls of its listeners in profound and stirring ways.” — Judy Murray

**Lucid Dreamer**

*Lucid Dreamer* is a musical interpretation of experiencing a waking state of reverie. The music is a delicate idea that gathers strength and takes flight, releasing the listener from the surly bonds of earth as it soars, dips, and glides like a flock of birds. “I think the new concerto is more musically complex, than anything I’ve ever written,” said Jens Kruger about the piece that took more than a year to write. “I don’t think it’s less accessible, but it has a lot more complex parts.”

In the relativity of life, Jens said, “My dreams were just as important in my memory as actual events…. [In dreams] I see endless beauty overshadowing the immediate. All my dreams have been filled with sounds and music…. It seems to me that all life is unfolding like a dream, swirling like dance in flight. For all things that have a beginning, I assume they must also have an end. I have a strong sense that dreams don’t need a beginning.” *Lucid Dreamer* was composed for banjo, guitar, and bass with string quartet, resulting in a thirty-three-minute work with seven movements.

**Appalachian Concerto**

Composed in 2010, the *Appalachian Concerto* is a work for banjo, bass, guitar, and string quartet. It was composed in the form of a classical concerto and written to reflect the cultural history of the Appalachian region. The concerto is a very different kind of work for the Kruger Brothers and is without any true precedent within their catalogue to date. Having made a name for themselves as primarily a roots trio, this offering is nevertheless exactly what the title suggests: a concerto in which the classical concerto format is applied faithfully. Still, if there are any real surprises here, perhaps the greatest is how entirely natural and obvious it was to pair the Kruger Brothers with a string quartet. The Kruger Brothers’ sound, after all, is principally an ensemble sound, with each of the players refining
and contributing to a single cause. In that sense, it’s as far from a traditional bluegrass arrangement — with instruments alternating between accompaniment and soloing — as you can get. Likewise, a classical string quartet, with its close harmonies, counterpoint, and the lack of a true “soloist” in a jazz or bluegrass sense, is an accurate analogue for the kind of ensemble playing that Jens, Joel, and Uwe have been doing for years.

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

Music of Amy Beach
Three by Three
“Washingtonians on Wednesdays”
March 22, 12:10
West Building, East Garden Court

Parker Quartet
Music by Mendelssohn, Shostakovich, and Augusta Read Thomas
March 26, 3:30
West Building, East Garden Court

Arianna Zukerman, soprano
Joy Schreier, piano
“Washingtonians on Wednesdays”
March 29, 12:10
West Building, East Garden Court

Apollo’s Fire
Sugarloaf Mountain: An Appalachian Gathering
Presented in honor of East of the Mississippi: Nineteenth-Century American Landscape Photography
April 2, 4:00
West Building, East Garden Court

Ben Williams Trio
“Washingtonians on Wednesdays”
April 5, 12:10
West Building, East Garden Court

Alliage Quintett
Dancing Paris
April 9, 3:30
West Building, East 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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