

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

Ben Williams Trio

"Washingtonians on Wednesdays"

April 5, 12:10

East Building Auditorium

Alliage Quintett

*Dancing Paris*

April 9, 3:30

West Building, East Garden Court

John Kilkenny, percussion

Tobias Werner, cello

"Washingtonians on Wednesdays"

Music by Nick Didkovsky, Stephen Gorbos, Osvaldo Golijov, and Mark Mellits

April 12, 12:10

East Building Auditorium

Eya

*Florence: The Cultural Crucible*

Presented in honor of *Della Robbia*:

*Sculpting with Color in Renaissance Florence*

April 15, 12:00 and 2:00

West Building, West Garden Court

*The Sarajevo Haggadah: Music of the Book*

Merima Ključo's multimedia work for accordion, piano, and video

April 15, 3:00

East Building Auditorium

*Musical Dialogues: An Exploration of Hope*

April 16, 3:00

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.

Concerts are made possible in part through the generosity of donors to the National Gallery of Art through The Circle. Reserved seating is available in recognition of their support. Please contact the development office at (202) 842-6450 or [circle@nga.gov](mailto:circle@nga.gov) for more information.

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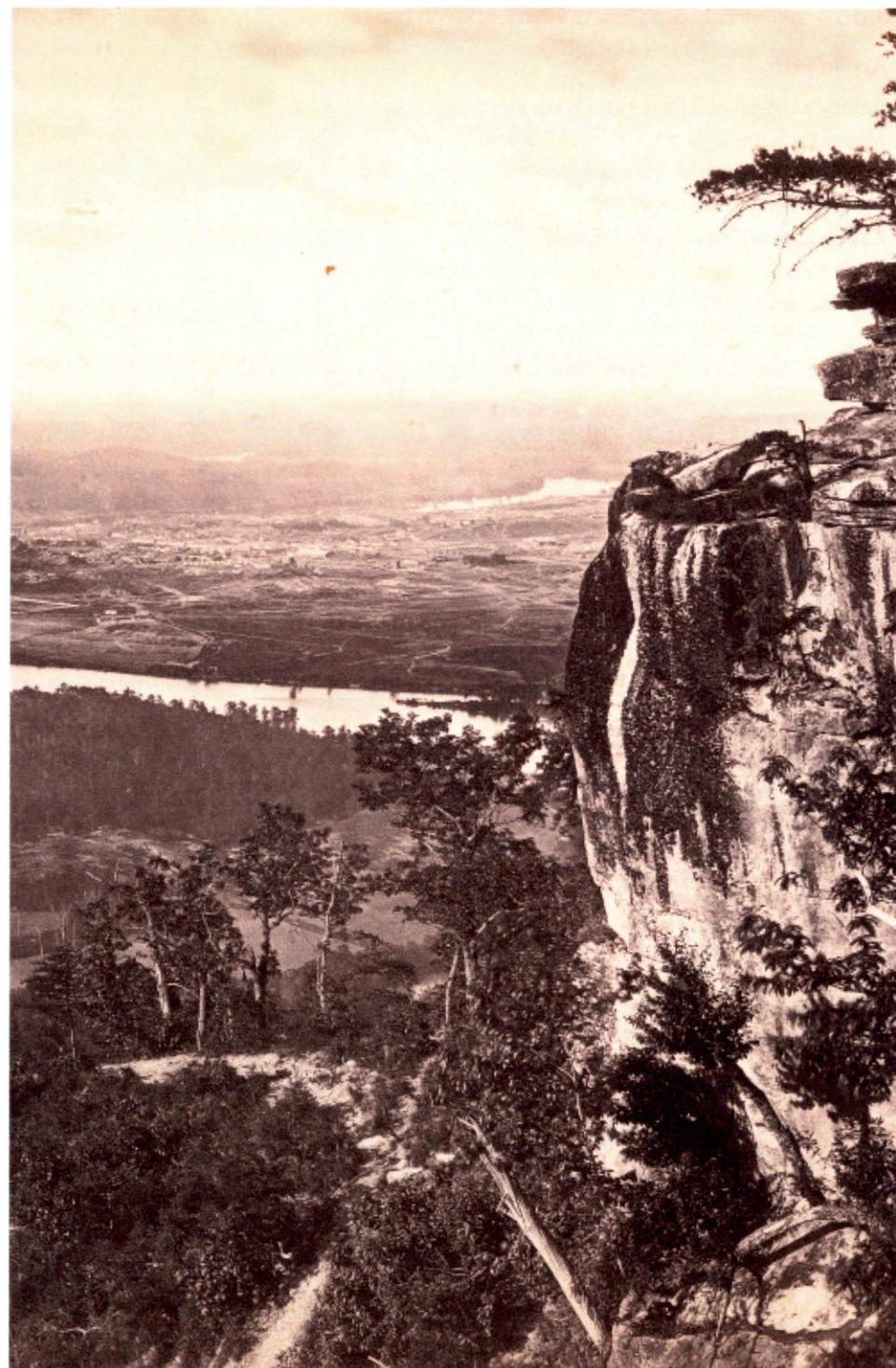
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Cover Isaac H. Bonsall, *Chattanooga, Tennessee, from Lookout Mountain* (detail), 1863-1865, National Gallery of Art, Washington, Collection of Paul Sack

# 75TH SEASON OF CONCERTS

APRIL 2, 2017 • NATIONAL GALLERY OF ART



# PROGRAM

4:00 • West Building, East Garden Court

## Apollo's Fire

Amanda Powell and Ross Hauck, vocals  
Jeannette Sorrell, director, harpsichord, arranger  
Tina Bergmann, hammered dulcimer  
Susanna Perry Gilmore, violin  
Kathie Stewart, wooden flutes  
Brian Kay, lute, guitar, banjo, long-neck dulcimer  
René Schiffer, cello

*Sugarloaf Mountain: An Appalachian Gathering*

## PROLOGUE: FAREWELL TO THE ISLES

"The Mountains of Rhùm"  
Arr. Jeannette Sorrell

## CROSSING TO THE NEW WORLD

"We'll Rant and We'll Roar"  
Arr. Jeannette Sorrell

"Farewell to Ireland — Highlander's Farewell"

## DARK MOUNTAIN HOME

"Nottamun Town"  
Arr. Brian Kay  
Brian Kay, vocals and long-neck dulcimer

"The Cruel Sister"  
Arr. Jeannette Sorrell  
Amanda Powell, vocals

"Se Fath Mo Buartha" (The Cause of All  
My Sorrows), "The Butterfly," and  
"Barney Brallaghan"  
Arr. Kathie Stewart  
Kathie Stewart, flute

"Black Is the Color of My True Love's Hair"  
Arr. René Schiffer and Jeannette Sorrell  
Ross Hauck, vocals

"I Wonder as I Wander," "Kitchen Girl,"  
and "Over the Isles to America"  
Arr. Jeannette Sorrell  
Jeannette Sorrell, harpsichord

## CAMPFIRE TALES

"Fox Went Out on a Chilly Night"  
Arr. Jeannette Sorrell  
Amanda Powell, vocals

"A Frog He Went A-Courtin'"  
Arr. Jeannette Sorrell

## Intermission

## FRONT PORCH FIDDLIN'

"Oh Susanna!"  
Stephen Foster (1826 - 1864)  
Arr. Jeannette Sorrell

"Pretty Peg/Far from Home"  
Susanna Perry Gilmore, fiddle,  
with René Schiffer, cello

## LOVE AND LOSS

"Once I Had a Sweetheart"

"Wayfaring Stranger"  
from the *Kentucky Harmony* (1816)

"Pretty Betty Martin/Katy Did/  
Red Rockin' Chair"  
Arr. Tina Bergmann  
Tina Bergmann, hammered dulcimer  
and vocals

"Just before the Battle, Mother"  
George Frederick Root, 1820 - 1895  
Ross Hauck, vocals

"Go March Along"  
Amanda Powell, vocals

## GLORY ON THE MOUNTAIN

"Glory in the Meeting House"  
Arr. Jeannette Sorrell, René Schiffer,  
and Tina Bergmann

"Oh Mary, Don't You Weep"  
Amanda Powell, vocals

## APPALACHIAN HOME

"A Southern Jack Tale"

"Sugarloaf Mountain"  
Lyrics and Arr. Jeannette Sorrell

## The Musicians

Named for the classical god of music and the sun, Apollo's Fire was founded in 1992 by the award-winning young harpsichordist and conductor Jeannette Sorrell. Sorrell envisioned an ensemble dedicated to the baroque ideal that music should evoke the various *affekts*, or passions, in the listeners. Apollo's Fire is a collection of creative artists who share Sorrell's passion for drama and rhetoric.

Hailed as "one of the preeminent period-instrument ensembles" (*Independent*, London), Apollo's Fire made its London debut in 2010 in a sold-out concert at Wigmore Hall, with a BBC broadcast. Subsequent European tours with sold-out performances took place in 2011, 2014, and 2015.

North American tour engagements include the Tanglewood Festival, the Aspen Music Festival, the Boston Early Music Festival series, the Library of Congress, the Metropolitan Museum of Art, and major venues in Toronto, Los Angeles, and San Francisco. The ensemble has performed in U.S. tours of the Monteverdi Vespers (2010 and 2014) and a nine-concert tour of the Brandenburg Concertos in 2013.

This summer Apollo's Fire returns to the Tanglewood Festival and makes its debut at the Ravinia Festival. It makes its Carnegie Hall debut in March 2018.

At home in Cleveland, Apollo's Fire enjoys sold-out performances at its subscription series, which has drawn national attention for creative programming. The ensemble has released twenty-four commercial CDs and currently records for the British label AVIE. Seven of the group's CD releases have become best sellers on the classical *Billboard* chart.

## Program

Long ago,  
The sparkling fiddle tunes and haunting ballads  
Of the British Isles  
Came across the water —  
Taking root in the hills of Virginia,  
Mingling with southern hymns and African spirituals.  
Creating the soulful music we call Appalachian.

The people of the mountains raise their communal voices  
In celebration of daily life —  
Love, singing, dancing, and prayer.

Nestled between the hills of the Blue Ridge Mountains and the eastern Appalachians, at the northern tip of the Shenandoah Valley, lies beautiful Sugarloaf Mountain. Nearby, Amanda Powell, Kathie Stewart, and I spent some formative years of our lives. From Frederick County, where I lived as a teenager, and where Amanda later went to college, you can see the rounded slope of Sugarloaf Mountain in the distance.

This area became my home when I was fourteen. I was still trying to figure out how to understand the Southern accents when, unexpectedly, I was offered my first job playing the piano for the Greenway Southern Baptist Church. I was welcomed with open arms by this small Revivalist congregation, which represented a completely different culture from mine. I was entranced by the beautiful, stark harmonies of the Southern hymns and by the passionate singing of the congregation. There was a sense of communal joy there.

I also keenly remember the lovely Appalachian ballad singer, Madeline MacNeil, who would travel around to the small towns of the valley, playing her lap dulcimer and singing these ancient ballads — most of which had come over from the British Isles, yet she sang them in an Appalachian way.

I left Virginia at the age of seventeen and never looked back, until 2008, when a grant from the National Endowment for the Arts sent me to the libraries for two years of research in early American traditional music, and, inevitably, a journey back to my teenage years in the valley. From this was born Apollo's Fire's 2009 program, *Come to the River: An Early American Gathering*. The completely unexpected popularity of *Come to the River* — sold-out concerts for years and a CD that spent two weeks in the Top 10 of the *Billboard* chart — led me to ponder the way this music speaks to us and to our shared roots.

*Sugarloaf Mountain* is not a sequel to *Come to the River*. If anything, it is a prequel — reaching back in time to explore the earliest roots of the Appalachian heritage.

The immigrants from the British Isles who made the crossing and built the Appalachian community were mostly from the impoverished lower classes. They left their beloved isles of Scotland and Ireland only to face endless years of unemployment, hunger, and civil strife. The ballads they brought with them, which date back to the Renaissance and in some cases the Medieval period, include many that are dark and haunting. Topics such as murder and fratricide are very common in this repertoire, but there are also delightfully playful children's songs. In short, life was hard back in the home country — and it was still hard in the Appalachian hills. Yet it was also filled with joy and laughter.

In this program, we explore the communal journey of these Celtic immigrants, who left their island homes with sadness, but also with great hope. Their stories involve many young men who had to leave their sweethearts behind in Scotland or Ireland; many young women who had to face the choice of a dangerous and unknown life in the wilderness of the New World, or the seemingly certain poverty and hopelessness of remaining at home in Ireland; and many children who made joyful games for themselves amidst the hard-working poverty of their parents. The stories, the sorrows, and the shared laughter of these immigrants are told in these ballads.

The typical instrumental ensemble of early America was the “Old-Time” band, consisting of a fiddle and a banjo to start with, and maybe adding a guitar and a singer if available. Of course the Irish were among the most prominent groups of immigrants, and they brought their airs, jigs, and reels with them. In our opening Prologue, the traditional Celtic air “The Mountains of Rhúm,” a young couple prepares to bid a sad farewell to the beautiful Scottish and Irish islands. This leads into a set I call Crossing to the New World. Here we evoke the last night at home before boarding the ship for the New World, with a lively céili dance. Our version of the traditional British and Canadian sea shanty, “We’ll Rant and We’ll Roar,” evokes the hopes and fears of the men and women who made the crossing — sometimes by choice and sometimes in desperation. This erupts into a “barn dance” featuring the Irish reel “Farewell to Ireland” and the Appalachian version of the Scottish reel “Highlander’s Farewell.”

The large group of ballads from Renaissance England and Scotland that made their way across the Atlantic and permeated the fabric of Appalachian culture are known as the Child Ballads — named for the ethnomusicologist James Francis Child, who spent a lifetime collecting and cataloguing them. As mentioned, many of these are dark, and we explore that aspect of the Appalachian psyche in the second set, which I call Dark Mountain Home. This section includes the medieval ballad “Nottamun Town,” which can still be heard today in the English Midlands, particularly in Nottinghamshire and Southern Yorkshire; however, it is much more popular in Appalachia. Probably “Nottamun” is a corruption of Nottingham. The nonsensical lyrics describe an absurdly topsy-turvy world, and the song may have been part of the Feast of Fools, a medieval festival where the hierarchy of the local clergy was flipped for a day, with the lower clergy elevated to power. The festival was frowned upon by the church and repeatedly condemned in the fifteenth century. In the twentieth century, Bob Dylan used the melody of “Nottamun Town” for his song, “Masters of War.”

The Renaissance ballad “The Cruel Sister” is also known as “Two Sisters” (“Twa Sisters” in the earliest sources). About twenty-six different versions of its text and about five different tunes for it can be found in New England and Appalachian folk music sources. The version that I created uses three different tunes, chosen to suit the character at different moments of the story. I drew the text and the tunes from versions in the *Northumbrian Minstrelsy* (an 1882 publication of much older ballads as they were sung in North England and Scotland), and Cecil Sharp’s collection of *English Folk Songs from the Southern Appalachians* (1932).

The Campfire Tales section of our program was inspired partly by the descriptions that respected folk singer Jean Ritchie provides about her childhood in Kentucky — neighbors would gather around the campfire for songs, stories, tall tales, and dancing. The ballad “Fox

Went Out on a Chilly Night” is centuries old and can be found in many early English sources as well as in Appalachian versions. There are even two versions in Middle English from the time of Chaucer.

In the Front Porch Fiddlin’ section, our version of the 1848 minstrel song “Oh Susanna” was inspired by our wish to sing the praises of our fabulous fiddle player, Susanna Perry Gilmore. Our resident “minstrel,” Brian Kay, begins the song with “a banjo on his knee” — and indeed he plays a gourd banjo similar to the African instrument in use by nineteenth-century minstrels. Then “Susanna” takes the spotlight, performing a virtuoso set of variations composed by our cellist René Schiffer.

No program about early America could be complete without a look at the music of Old-Time Religion. The Glory on the Mountain section of our program evokes the small meeting houses of the Revival Movement in the Appalachians, where Southern hymns and spirituals were born in the early nineteenth century. From 1800 to 1850, several different shape-note hymnals were published, including the *Kentucky Harmony* in 1816, the *Southern Harmony* in 1835, and the *Sacred Harp* in 1844.

This was the era when the Celtic immigrants of the Appalachians met the music of enslaved Africans — resulting in the vibrant infusion of African American spirituals into the musical fabric. The Kentucky fiddle tune “Glory in the Meeting House” opens this set with fiery ecstasy. The spirituals sung by Amanda Powell — “Go March Along” and “Oh Mary, Don’t You Weep” — represent the fervent and soulful expression of rural Appalachian worshippers, both black and white. Our version of “Oh Mary” is inspired by the tradition of a cappella vocal ensembles such as Take 6 and the Cherryholmes family.

This program probably would not have been possible without the pioneering work of the great American ethnomusicologist Alan Lomax. Lomax, who died in 2002, spent most of his life journeying through rural America and making field recordings of Old-Time and Appalachian singers. His series of anthologies of traditional American songs and dance tunes is a treasure-trove of the folk art of regional cultures.

To close the concert, the echoes of the Scottish air that opened the program now return with a more Appalachian feel. I took the liberty to write new lyrics to this melody, celebrating Sugarloaf Mountain and its settlers. The song reflects the communal journey of our grandparents and their grandparents, as they made the crossing to the New World and built their new mountain homeland, one cabin at a time. We hope that these concerts ring with their inextinguishable spirit.

*Program notes by Jeannette Sorrell*