As seen on the Late Show with David Letterman, the Kontras Quartet returns to the Donald P. Bullock Music Performance Institute at Western Michigan University with the folk trio, the Kruger Brothers. Their collaboration with the Kruger Brothers bridges the line between classical music and American folk while drawing on diverse musical traditions to create original, exciting, inspiring performances that speak to people from around the world.

Dalton Wed@7:30pm: Live and Interactive!

2016–17 Season
344th Concert
Wednesday 15 February 2017
Dalton Center Recital Hall
7:30 p.m.
Pre-Concert talk with Dr. Robert White at 7 p.m.

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

KRUGER BROTHERS
Jens Kruger, Banjo
Uwe Kruger, Guitar
Joel Landsberg, Bass

Program will be announced from stage and will include the following works composed by Jens Kruger:

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

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Admiried 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 records for MSR Classics and recently released two 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.

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, IBMA, 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 their concert schedule, the quartet will hold teaching residencies at Elmhurst College and Appalachian State University in 2016. They 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 more than 40,000 students.

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.

Originally from Switzerland, brothers Uwe and Jens Kruger began playing North American folk music at an early age and were particularly inspired by recordings of Doc Watson, Flatt and Scruggs, Bill Monroe, and other progenitors of country, bluegrass and folk music. Their first public performances were as a duo, busking on the streets of cities throughout eastern and Western Europe. After gaining a recording contract as well as a radio show on SRG SSR, the Swiss public broadcaster, they teamed up with bass player Joel Landsberg, inaugurating a trio that has been playing professionally together since 1995. Landsberg is an American citizen from New York, N.Y. The first recording project to include Landsberg was Behind the Barn, Volume two, released in 1997. The **KRUGER BROTHERS** moved to the United States in 2002, and are based in Wilkesboro, N.C.

The group is highly regarded within the world of acoustic music in North America, in particular by those within the industry. They have also gained the attention of some of the musicians, including Bill Monroe, Doc Watson, Tut Taylor, and Bobby Hicks, that once served as models. Watson has said, “The Kruger Brothers are just about as fine a band as I’ve ever played with... I love to play music with them.”

In 2013, Jens Kruger was named the fourth recipient of the Steve Martin Prize for Excellence in Banjo and Bluegrass Music. The prize, created and endowed by Martin, recognizes “outstanding accomplishments in the field of five-string banjo,” Jens was selected by a committee that included Martin, Pete Wernick, Béla Fleck, Alison Brown, J.D. Crowe, Tony Trischka, and others.

Jens Kruger has been inducted to the Blue Ridge Music Hall of Fame, and has been nominated for Banjo Instrumentalist of the year by the International Bluegrass Musician Association (IBMA) in 2014 and has received commissions for his ensemble compositions that include through the National Endowment for the Arts and Chamber Music America.

This concert is a **Bullock Performance Institute** (BPI) presentation. BPI events are made possible through the cooperation and support of several community fine arts units: the Donald P. Bullock Music Performance Institute; WMUK National Public Radio; the Western Michigan University College of Fine Arts and School of Music; and WMU’s chapters of Phi Mu Alpha Sinfonia and Sigma Alpha Iota music fraternities.