

KONTRAS QUARTET explores the role of chamber music in the new millennium, at once keeping classic tradition and style alive while embracing new opportunities and fusing genres to expand the art form and include a more diverse audience. Formed in 2009, the "superb Chicago-based ensemble" (Gramophone Magazine) has become known for its vibrant and nuanced performances, "crisp precision" (Palm Beach Daily News), "superlative artistry" (CVNC Arts Journal), and unique penchant for exploring the folk roots of classical music. Kontras's "enjoyable musical personality" (Fanfare Magazine) and welcoming, friendly approach to the recital stage have attracted audiences near and far for over a decade. Kontras means 'contrasts' in the Afrikaans language - fitting for a string ensemble whose colorful repertoire spans centuries, genres, and continents.

Kontras Quartet's recent engagements include international tours of South Africa and Switzerland, broadcasts on classical radio stations nationwide (including Performance Today and a 3-month residency with Chicago's WFMT 98.7 fm), performances at Chicago's Symphony Center and the National Gallery of Art in Washington D.C., and television appearances on NBC and PBS. Kontras served as Artists in Residence with San Diego's Art of Elan from 2018-2021, commissioning and premiering multiple new works, and collaborating with numerous artists including Malashock Dance and Branford Marsalis.

Kontras Quartet has released three critically acclaimed albums with two more slated to be released in 2023. The first, [Origins](#), on MSR classics, was commended by Gramophone Magazine for the quartet's "scrupulous shading and control". The second, [Lucid Dreamer](#), a 2013 Chamber Music America commission, treads the line between classical music and American folk and invigorates Kontras' ongoing collaboration with the esteemed [Kruger Brothers](#) trio, as does their 2017 release, the [Roan Mountain Suite](#). Upcoming plans for Kontras and Kruger Brothers include a fall 2023 tour of Switzerland, and an album release of their latest septet, *The Moonshine Sonata*, on DoubleTime Records.

All four Kontras members are passionate music educators. In addition to holding faculty positions at Elmhurst University, Kontras served as Quartet in Residence at [Western Michigan University](#) from 2014 through 2020 and held short-term teaching residencies at University of California San Diego, University of Chicago, University of Oregon, and others. In 2016, the quartet received a grant from the Boeing Company to perform a series of outreach programs to thousands of students across the Chicagoland area.

Kontras Quartet gained early acclaim during a four-year chamber music residency with the Western Piedmont Symphony established through Chamber Music America's Residency Partnership Program. While in North Carolina, the quartet made a significant community impact in the Hickory metro area with their innovative and interactive programming, performing for over 40,000 school-age and college students in addition to their popular recital series.

Kontras Quartet's early mentors included the Vermeer and Juilliard Quartets.