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NEWS RELEASE

CORIGLIANO QUARTET TO VISIT UD ON WAY TO BIG APPLE

DAYTON, Ohio — It's one of parenting's bittersweet ironies — the more nurturing the environment in which a child is raised, the greater the chance that child will one day spread its wings and fly the nest.

And so it is that Indiana University, birthplace, "parent" and home to the Corigliano Quartet, will soon bid a fond farewell to the ensemble as it makes a play for the big time in the Big Apple.

Just before they audition for the highly coveted quartet residency at the Juilliard School in New York March 28, musicians Melia Watras, Michael Jinsoo Lim, Jeffrey Zeigler and Lina Bahn will spend a few days performing and coaching students at the University of Dayton.

The Corigliano Quartet will perform in concert at 8 p.m. Thursday, March 23, in the Kennedy Union Boll Theatre. Tickets are \$10 general admission, \$5 for faculty and staff and \$3 for students and are available by calling the theater box office at (937) 229-2545.

The program will feature Elliott Carter's challenging "String Quartet No. 4," Mozart's "String Quartet K 590" and Beethoven's "String Quartet," Op. 59, No. 9 — the same music they'll perform at the Lincoln Center audition five days later.

"We're really excited about our "String Quartet No. 4," said Watras, a 1987 graduate of Dayton's Colonel White High School. "It is such a difficult piece and took us so long to learn that we were thrilled when we could finally play the whole piece through well — even though it wasn't until one week before we were scheduled to play it for the first time in January.

Watras laughed as she added, "We do have a tendency to pull things together at the last minute."

For example, the group's birth as the first string quartet-in-residence at IU in 1996 was not only unplanned, it came after a remarkably short gestation. Four talented young musicians who'd never before played together were given just three weeks to learn, rehearse and perform an "incredibly difficult" piece of music — John Corigliano's "String Quartet," Watras said.

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The internationally renowned composer, present at the performance, was so impressed with the group that he asked them to remain a quartet and become heir to his name.

The quartet's reputation and career have steadily blossomed since that noteworthy debut.

In addition to the group's busy performance schedule in the United States and abroad, 1998 brought a first place win in the Chamber Music Yellow Springs concert series competition and a finalist award in the prestigious Naumburg Competition in New York.

In the spring of 1999, the quartet was unanimously selected first place winner by judges at the Fischhoff Chamber Music competition in South Bend, Ind. — an honor that included a paid tour of cities in Indiana, Minnesota and Illinois last fall. They also performed in concert with Boston's Muir String Quartet in Utah and with the Juilliard String Quartet in New York.

With several prestigious performance events on the horizon — including international competitions in Italy in June and Munich in September and training in Aspen, Colo., in the summer — the quartet is even more enthusiastic about finding a new residency, a move that will most likely take them east.

"It's a move our manager has been encouraging strongly for some time now," Watras said. "There are several possibilities, but the one we're really excited about is the residency at Juilliard. It would be an ideal situation and one we'd be thrilled to have. We'll really miss our coach at Indiana University, Atar Arad, but we're very much looking forward to moving on."

Although the Corigliano Quartet has seen two musician changes since its debut — Watras and Lim, who is also her husband, are originals — Watras said the group continually improves as its members grow and mature together.

"Things just keep getting better and better, and it's been a real learning experience," she said. "It can truly take a good bit of time for the members of a quartet to learn to play together well. There's so much more to performing than just keeping the tempo and playing the notes correctly. We've learned to read each other's body language and all the other ways we have of communicating with one another, and that's helped us grow as a team."

"We've also been really happy," Watras added. "We enjoy playing together, our career has been steadily growing and we're so geared up for the audition at Juilliard. We may be known as the Corigliano Quartet, but you can also call us the happy quartet."

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For media interviews, call **Melia Watras** at (812) 332-1751.