



9-5-2007

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Recommended Citation

Sherman, Teresa A., "School of Music to Present the Ariana String Quartet" (2007). *News and Events*. 182.

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September 5, 2007

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School of Music to Present the Ariana String Quartet

BLOOMINGTON, Ill. – Made possible by the recently endowed Anna McGrosso Visiting Artist Fund, Illinois Wesleyan University's School of Music will present a special concert by the Ariana String Quartet on Saturday, Sept. 15 at 7:30 p.m. in the Westbrook Auditorium of Presser Hall (1210 N. Park St., Bloomington).

The event is free and open to the public.

John McGrosso, former Illinois Wesleyan professor of music from 1958 to 1989, established the Anna McGrosso Visiting Artist Fund last April in honor and memory of his late wife, Anna, a well-known piano instructor. The fund will enable the School of Music to begin an annual series that will bring outstanding guest performers to campus. Fittingly, the critically acclaimed chamber ensemble the Ariana String Quartet, of which the McGrossos's son John is a member, will deliver the first of these performances.

For the concert, The Ariana String Quartet will perform three string quartets: *String Quartet in F Major, Op. 18, No. 1* by Ludwig van Beethoven, *String Quartet No. 1, Op. 49* by Dimitri Shostakovich and *String Quartet in D Major, Op. 44, No. 1* by Felix Mendelssohn.

Formed in 1992, the Ariana String Quartet rose to national prominence in 1994, winning the Grand Prize in the Fischhoff Chamber Music Competition and First Prize in both the Coleman and Carmel Chamber Music Competitions. In 1999, they were the Laureates in the Bordeaux International String Quartet Competition. The quartet has performed throughout the United States, Mexico, Canada, France, and Japan, delivering critically acclaimed concerts at Orchestra Hall in Chicago and Suntory Hall in Tokyo. The Ariana Quartet has recorded for the Centaur, Albany, and Urtext classical labels, and has been heard on live nationally broadcast performances in Osaka, Japan, through Canada's CBC radio, as part of Chicago's prestigious Dame Myra Hess Series, and on National Public Radio's "Performance Today" program.

Particularly lauded for their innovated educational programs, the quartet has given over 700 educational outreach performances and was awarded Chamber Music America Residency Grants in 1996 and 2003. The Missouri String Teacher's Association recognized the quartet for

outstanding contributions to music education and the cultivation of young audiences throughout the state by honoring them with their 2005 Distinguished Service Award. That same year, the members of the quartet were appointed to the faculty at the University of Missouri-St. Louis as Artist Teachers and Quartet-in-Residence, and were recently named associate professors of music.

Current members of the quartet are violinists John McGrosso and David Gilham, violist Robert Meyer and cellist Kurt Baldwin. For their individual profiles, visit their Web site at <http://www.Arianaquartet.com>.

Anna McGrosso, a piano specialist at Illinois Wesleyan's School of Music, also held teaching positions at Illinois State University and the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, while maintaining a rigorous private studio for advanced pianists. McGrosso received a degree in music from Texas Women's College, studied piano with renowned Julliard professors in New York City and attended Indiana University. Later, she was awarded the Rockefeller Fellowship for study with Edward Steuermann in New York City and became an honorary Music Teacher National Association Fellow. During her life, she performed in numerous solo and chamber music concerts and, together with her husband, performed numerous times at Illinois Wesleyan's Presser Hall.

For additional information about the Anna McGrosso Visiting Artist Fund or about the Ariana String Quartet performance, contact Mario Pelusi, professor of music and director of the School of Music.

- 30 -