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**JOEL SMIRNOFF, FIRST VIOLINIST OF THE JUILLIARD STRING QUARTET, WILL BECOME  
PRESIDENT OF THE CLEVELAND INSTITUTE OF MUSIC**

**Mr. Smirnoff to Continue Performing with the World-Famous Quartet and  
Teaching at The Juilliard School During a Transitional Year as the Quartet Chooses Its New Member**

Violinist Joel Smirnoff, a member of the Juilliard String Quartet since 1986, will become president of the Cleveland Institute of Music, made official and announced on April 30, 2008, by that conservatory.

At Juilliard, where he has also been a faculty member since 1986, Mr. Smirnoff will continue to teach and perform with the Quartet throughout the transitional 2008-2009 season.

According to Juilliard President Joseph W. Polisi, who is credited with strengthening the Quartet's faculty involvement over the years, "Joel Smirnoff's artistry, intellect, and integrity will make him an extraordinary president of the Cleveland Institute of Music. We will all miss Joel's exceptional leadership and his warm personality, and we wish him the very best in this important new endeavor. We look forward to welcoming a new member of the Quartet to the Juilliard community."

Since its founding as Juilliard's resident string quartet in 1946 (by then-Juilliard President William Schuman) the Juilliard String Quartet has come to define the 'American Sound' in string quartet and chamber repertoire. The current membership includes Joel Smirnoff and Ronald Copes, violins; Samuel Rhodes, viola; and Joel Krosnick, cello. In its 62-year history, the Quartet has had eleven different members, with each change happening singly and many years apart. Each change of personnel created a newly-strengthened and energized ensemble. The current membership of the Quartet has been together since 1997, when the founding violinist of the Quartet, Robert Mann, retired after 50 years, and Joel Smirnoff assumed the position of first chair, with Ronald Copes added as second.

According to Mr. Smirnoff's fellow quartet members, "Joel Smirnoff is a cherished colleague and we will miss him. It's been a great run. He will play the 2008-09 season concerts with us as we enter into the process of finding a

new partner, which we expect will once again be an enlightening adventure, as the life of the Juilliard Quartet continues to evolve.

“People often ask us about the ensemble's longevity in terms of a specific sound, and how the Juilliard String Quartet sound has not changed through the years. The truth is that the sound has greatly changed through the years. The Quartet's sound is very different now than it was at the group's inception because the personnel – with very individual and strong personalities -- is different. The sound of any ensemble changes over time, if it is a living, responsive, organic group. We welcome this chance to refresh and renew our vision, to blend sound and personality in new ways, and to consider the music-making process anew.”

The Quartet's efforts to expand the canon of string quartet literature, by performing and commissioning works from noted contemporary composers such as Milton Babbitt, Ralph Shapey, Ezekiel Viñao, and Richard Wernick, has always been a major commitment. While well known for their numerous landmark performances and recordings of classical works, the Quartet has championed many contemporary composers. Special among them has been the centenarian Elliott Carter. On April 29, 2008, at The Juilliard School, the Quartet performed a program with clarinetist and fellow-Juilliard faculty member Charles Neidich in which they premiered Elliott Carter's Quintet for String Quartet and Clarinet, commissioned for them by The Juilliard School. The Quartet's landmark recording of Carter's first four string quartets was released by Sony Classical in celebration of the ensemble's 45<sup>th</sup> anniversary.

All of the members of the Juilliard String Quartet, including founding member and former first violinist Robert Mann and former second violinist Earl Carlyss, are active and popular teachers on the string and chamber music faculties at Juilliard. Mr. Rhodes and Mr. Krosnick are the chairs of their departments, as is Mr. Smirnoff.

Reiterating their collective dedication to music and to performance education, while looking toward the future, Messrs. Copes, Rhodes, and Krosnick also stated, "What keeps our group unified is that our philosophy and sense of purpose remain the same: to play the classics as if they were written yesterday, and to play contemporary pieces, including ones that are brand new, as if they were written many years ago. There is also our strong commitment to teaching. We will be searching for a new colleague who embraces that vision and adds value to it. It will be exciting to find a new voice to join us and we look forward to many more years of the Juilliard String Quartet."

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