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**RENOWNED VIOLIST MICHAEL TREE JOINS FACULTY  
OF THE USC THORNTON SCHOOL OF MUSIC**

*Michael Tree, founding member of the Guarneri String Quartet, will join the faculty of the USC Thornton School of Music in fall 2014.*

LOS ANGELES (November 5, 2013) – The University of Southern California Thornton School of Music announced today that violist Michael Tree will join the faculty in fall 2014. His addition further strengthens the school’s world class Strings faculty.

A founding member of the Guarneri String Quartet, Tree has performed on virtually every concert series throughout the world and has recorded more than 80 chamber music works for the Columbia, RCA, Philips, Arabesque, Nonesuch and Vanguard labels.

“We are thrilled to welcome Michael Tree to our Strings faculty,” said Robert Cutietta, Dean of the USC Thornton School of Music. “He will join two first-rate viola instructors in Karen Dreyfus and Che-Yen Chen. Both are former students of Michael, and the combined artistic excellence of the three is of the highest order.”

Karen Dreyfus is a founding member of the Lyric Piano Quartet, the Amerigo Trio and the Antonin Quartet. A graduate of the Curtis Institute of Music, she has performed extensively in the U.S., Canada, Europe, Asia and South America. She is on the faculties of the Manhattan School of Music, The Juilliard School and Mannes School of Music.

Che-Yen Chen, former principal violist of San Diego Symphony and founding member of the Formosa Quartet and The Myriad Trio, has been described by *The Strad* magazine as a musician whose “tonal distinction and essential musicality produced an auspicious impression.”

“I’m a great admirer of both players and they are both highly experienced teachers,” Tree said. “When I decided to join the USC Thornton faculty I felt I was among friends already.”

Distinguished Professor Midori Goto, chair of the Strings department and Jascha Heifetz Chair in Violin, said: “I am extremely excited to welcome Michael Tree to our department. As one of the

most prominent pedagogues and violists of our time, he has inspired and mentored many important musicians who are active today as performers, teachers, and administrators. I look forward to our collaboration in offering the best possible education that balances tradition with innovative ideas to shape the future of our field.”

Tree received his first violin instruction from his father. He later studied with Efrem Zimbalist, Lea Luboshutz and Veda Reynolds at the Curtis Institute. He made his Carnegie Hall debut in 1954 and has since appeared as both violinist and violist with many major orchestras. He has been awarded the New York City Seal of Recognition, and has participated in leading festivals, including Casals, Spoleto, Marlboro, Israel, Santa Fe, Tanglewood and Aspen. He is on the faculties of the Bard College Conservatory of Music, Curtis Institute, Juilliard and Manhattan School of Music.

“It is with great anticipation that I welcome Michael Tree, the outstanding American violist and teacher, to our faculty,” said Ralph Kirshbaum, the Gregor Piatigorsky Chair in Violoncello at USC Thornton. “Michael is a highly respected and much loved friend and colleague, whose expertise, knowledge, and experience will undoubtedly prove a source of inspiration for all of us at Thornton and, above all, for the fortunate students who will have the opportunity to study with him.”

Carl St.Clair, artistic leader and principal conductor of the USC Thornton orchestras, said: “I am excited to have someone of Michael's immense talents and long and illustrious career joining our distinguished faculty. Mr. Tree will certainly afford our students a unique learning experience.”

Tree said that his approach to teaching is a collaboration with students. “Someone once said that ‘Teaching is the art of assisting discovery,’” Tree said. “I think that is very true, and that puts the responsibility in our hands of not simply insisting that students do what the teacher says. My approach generally is to open up the various possibilities to students and teach them.”

Tree’s appointment at USC Thornton begins in the 2014-2015 school year. In a multi-year commitment, he will work individually with a small studio of Thornton viola students.

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### **About the USC Thornton School of Music Division of Classical Performance Studies**

*For more than 125 years, the USC Thornton School of Music has prepared students to excel as performers, composers, industry leaders, and educators on stages and in studios around the world. USC Thornton’s Division of Classical Performance Studies is built on a rich tradition of pairing legendary artist-faculty with students of the highest caliber. The program is a strong, close-knit community where students are constantly encouraged to challenge their limits and expand their capabilities. Acclaimed programs include Choral and Sacred Music, Classical Guitar, Composition, Keyboard Collaborative Arts, Keyboard Studies, Organ Studies, Strings, Vocal Arts and Opera and Winds and Percussion.*

*The Division of Classical Performance Studies is driven by artistry and world-class educators with a passion for teaching. USC Thornton faculty are internationally renowned performers, musicologists, and winners of prestigious awards. The program is guided by a keen ability to recognize and anticipate the ever-changing landscape of classical music, and the foresight to prepare students to launch outstanding careers in the 21st century. A rigorous conservatory of music nestled within an elite research university in the musically vibrant city of Los Angeles, USC Thornton offers students unparalleled opportunities for mentorship, study, and performance.*