The Ying Quartet first came to professional prominence in the early 1990s during their years as resident quartet of Jesup, Iowa, a farm town of 2000 people. Playing before audiences of six to six hundred in homes, schools, churches, and banks, the Quartet had its first opportunities to enable music and creative endeavor to become an integral part of community life. The Quartet considers its time in Jesup the foundation of its present musical life and goals. The residency, supported by a grant from the National Endowment for the Arts, was widely chronicled in the national media. Toward the end of the residency, the quartet and several of the townspeople were invited to Capitol Hill to testify before Congress on behalf of the NEA. The Quartet was originally founded by four siblings: Timothy, Janet, Phillip and David Ying.

During the summers, the Ying Quartet’s activity is primarily centered at music festivals. They are presently ensemble-in-residence at the Aspen Music Festival and also have performed and taught for several summers at the Bowdoin International Music Festival. Other festival appearances have been at Tanglewood, Ravinia, Caramoor, San Miguel de Allende, Kneisel Hall, Norfolk, Skaneateles, Amelia Island, Interlochen, and many others. The Quartet’s 2008-2009 season featured performances at Carnegie Hall and McGill University’s Haydn Festival, in addition to appearances with the Billy Childs Sextet.

As quartet-in-residence at the Eastman School of Music, the Ying Quartet teaches in the string department and leads a rigorous, sequentially designed chamber music program. One cornerstone of chamber music activity at Eastman is the noted Music for All program, in which all students have the opportunity to perform in community settings beyond the concert hall. From 2001-2008, the Ying Quartet has also been the Blodgett Artists-in-Residence at Harvard University.

CCM has become an All-Steinway School through the kindness of its donors. A generous gift by Patricia A. Corbett in her estate plan has played a key role in making this a reality.
The Ying Quartet occupies a position of unique prominence in the classical music world, combining brilliantly communicative performances with a fearlessly imaginative view of chamber music in today’s world. Now in its second decade as a quartet, the Quartet has established itself as an ensemble of the highest musical qualifications in its tours across the United States and abroad. Their performances regularly take place in many of the world’s most important concert halls, from Carnegie Hall to the Sydney Opera House. At the same time, the Quartet’s belief that concert music can also be a meaningful part of everyday life has also drawn the foursome to perform in settings as diverse as the workplace, schools, juvenile prisons, and the White House. In fact, the Ying Quartet’s constant quest to explore the creative possibilities of the string quartet has led it to an unusually diverse array of musical projects and interests.

Beginning with the 2010-2011 season, brilliant violinist Ayano Ninomiya joins the Ying Quartet as first violin. She is a top prizewinner in the 2003 Naumburg Competition and the 2006 Tibor Varga Competition, and has built a significant career of recital, concerto, music festival, and chamber music appearances. In addition, she brings her own passionate vision for imaginative programming, collaborative work, and audience engagement initiatives. Her presence marks an exciting new chapter of extraordinary and innovative music making in the concert hall and beyond.

The Ying Quartet’s recordings reflect many of the group’s wide-ranging musical interests and have generated consistent, enthusiastic acclaim. Their 2007 Telarc release of the three Tchaikovsky Quartets and the Souvenir de Florence (with James Dunham and Paul Katz) was nominated for a Grammy Award in the Best Chamber Music Performance category. In addition, their much-heralded collaboration with the Turtle Island Quartet, “Four + 4,” explored the common ground between the classic string quartet tradition and jazz and other American vernacular styles, and won a Grammy Award in 2005. “Dim Sum” (Telarc) is the Ying’s most recent recording, featuring music by Chinese-American composers that merges the Western string quartet with the aural world of traditional Chinese music. The Quartet has also documented its noteworthy LifeMusic commissioning project in its recorded work. Released by Quartz, “The Ying Quartet play LifeMusic” was named Editor’s Choice by Gramophone magazine and is the first in a continuing series.

continued on back