

# MELIA WATRAS

## BIOGRAPHY (Condensed)

Described as “staggeringly virtuosic” by *The Strad*, violist Melia Watras has been hailed by audiences and critics alike for her electrifying and vibrant performances. She has long been at the forefront of the American new music scene, both as a soloist and co-founder of the award winning Corigliano Quartet ([www.coriglianoquartet.com](http://www.coriglianoquartet.com)). Throughout her career Watras has championed the works of living composers, commissioning, premiering and recording numerous new works for the solo viola and for string quartet, while appearing in the nation’s leading venues including Carnegie Hall, Weill Recital Hall, Alice Tully Hall and the Kennedy Center. As the violist of the Corigliano Quartet, she has received awards such as the Grand Prize at the Fischhoff Competition and the ASCAP/CMA Award for Adventurous Programming.

Watras’s expanding discography has garnered considerable attention and praise from the media. Of her debut solo CD, *Viola Solo, Strings* remarked, “Watras is a young player in possession of stunning virtuosic talent and deserving of the growing acclaim.” *The Strad* called her “excellent” and “authoritative,” while the *American Record Guide* proclaimed, “Watras is a terrific violist.” For the CD, Watras adapted John Corigliano’s *Fancy on a Bach Air* for viola. Her edition of this work is published by G. Schirmer, Inc. Watras’s recently released second solo CD, *Prestidigitation* features world premiere recordings of five works written especially for her and was described by *Strings* as “astounding, and both challenging and addictive to listen to.” With the Corigliano Quartet, she has recorded for Naxos, Albany, Bayer, CRI, Riax, and Aguava and has appeared on NPR’s *All Things Considered* and *Performance Today* and WFMT-Chicago’s *Live from Studio One*. The quartet’s most recent CD was named one of the Ten Best Classical Recordings of the year by the *New Yorker*.

Watras studied with Atar Arad at Indiana University and served as an assistant to the Juilliard String Quartet while at the Juilliard School. In 2004 she was appointed Assistant Professor of Viola at the University of Washington School of Music, where she teaches viola and chamber music. For more information on Melia Watras, please visit [www.meliawatras.com](http://www.meliawatras.com).

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