

## Artist Biographies

**The Kobayashi/Gray Duo** made their international concert debut as winners of the prestigious United States Information Agency Artistic Ambassador auditions, touring South America and the West Indies. "The Duo's skill, energy and love they have for the music were all evident in this performance which brought the audience to its feet demanding an encore!" The Duo has presented lecture recitals at the First Second and Third International Conferences on Women's Work in Music in Bangor, Wales in 2017 and 2019 and 2021 live virtually; the 2002 International Workshops in Stavanger Norway, and conferences of the Music Teachers National Association, the American String Teachers Association, the College Music Society and the Society of Composers, Inc. They have toured throughout the country of Thailand (2012); the Western and Eastern Cape Provinces of South Africa (2003), and South America and the West Indies (1993). Notable US performance venues include the Dame Myra Hess Series and radio broadcast at the Chicago Cultural Center, at the National Museum of Women in the Arts in Washington, D.C., the International Festival of Women Composers, the Music by Women Festival, the Hot Springs Music Festival and a number of museum series--the Joslyn Art Museum in Omaha, Nebraska, the Detroit Institute of Arts, and the Toledo Art Museum.

The Duo is in demand throughout the world for their skillful presentations of the standard repertoire as well as their specialty of the works of more than twenty-five 19th to 21st century women composers. The Duo has two CDs of works by women composers--**Feminissimo! Women Playing Music by Women** (2008) and **Boldly Expressive! Music by Women** (2000). Eight of these works are world premiere recordings, including *Grande Sonate, Op. 8* by 19th century French composer Marie Grandval, which the Duo edited for Hildegard Publishing Company.

**Laura Kobayashi** leads a varied career as a performer and pedagogue. She has participated in numerous music festivals in the United States, Puerto Rico, Norway, Argentina and Brazil and has appeared as a soloist with the Seattle, Spokane, and Grand Junction Symphonies, the Northwest Chamber Orchestra, the Omaha Symphony Chamber Orchestra, the Salta Chamber Orchestra in Salta, Argentina and the Chiang Rai Youth Orchestra in Chiang Rai, Thailand. As an active chamber musician, she has performed abroad in Argentina and Puerto Rico and in the United States, at the Piccolo Spoleto Festival in Charleston, South Carolina; Merkin Concert Hall in New York City, the Embassy of Bulgaria in Washington, D.C. as well as numerous other concert venues throughout the United States. In addition to performing with her duo partner, Susan Keith Gray, Dr. Kobayashi also performs as a member of the Main Street Chamber Players and is a founding member of the Main Street Music Studios in Fairfax, VA where she maintains a large private studio of private violin students. She has been honored as a recipient of several awards in her career, including the 2012 VASTA (Virginia State Chapter of ASTA) Outstanding String Teacher Award and the "Excellence in Teaching" Award by the Division of Music and College of Creative Arts at West Virginia University. Her past teaching positions include serving on the faculties at West Virginia University, the San Francisco Conservatory of Music, the University of Georgia and the University of Nebraska at Omaha. In addition, for a short period of time as a professional orchestral musician, she played as a member of the second violin section in the San Francisco Opera Orchestra. Dr. Kobayashi studied violin with Dorothy DeLay, Paul Kantor, Andrew Jennings and Denes Zsigmondy and has performed in the master classes of Nathan Milstein, Arthur Grumiaux, Ruggiero Ricci and Gyorgy Pauk. Chamber music studies have been with members of the Juilliard, Tokyo and American String Quartets as well as with collaborative pianists, Robert McDonald and Samuel Sanders. Dr. Kobayashi earned degrees from The Juilliard School and Yale University and the Doctor of Musical Arts from The University of Michigan.

**Susan Keith Gray** shares her love of music through a multi-faceted career as teacher and performer in the fields of solo and collaborative piano. An award-winning member of the faculty at the University of South Dakota, she received the Belbas-Larson Award for Excellence in Teaching in 2005 and the 2014-2016 Esther and Wayne Knutson Distinguished Faculty Award for the College of Fine Arts. Her career in collaboration has included the privilege to work with a wide array of esteemed partners such as singers Scott Piper, Carla Connors, Earl Coleman, Patricia Prunty and Louis Otey; violinists Scott St. John, Anna Vayman and Mihaela Oprea; cellists Keith Robinson and Anthony Elliott; flutists Leone

Buyse and Torkil Bye; clarinetists Richard Hawkins and Theodore Oien; trumpeter, Joe Burgstaller; and bassists Barry Green and Maximilian Dimoff. She has served as collaborative artist/faculty at Cedar Valley Chamber Music Festival, Hot Springs Music Festival, Music Academy of the West and Camp Opera and on the staff of the American Horn Competition and the GM/Seventeen Magazine National Concerto Competition where she performed with cellists Wendy Warner and Zuill Bailey.

As a member of the University of South Dakota Rawlins Piano Trio, Gray has recorded four discs of American piano trios (Albany Records, Azica) and has twice performed the complete cycle of Beethoven piano trios. The Trio has commissioned and recorded seven new works and continues to focus on unknown treasures of the repertoire. Opera and art song credits include Saginaw Opera (MI), the University of Michigan Opera Workshop, Sioux Falls Friends of Opera, tours of African-American Art Song with soprano Charsie Randolph-Sawyer and performances and recordings for public radio and compact disc of African-American art song with Randolph-Sawyer, Louise Toppin, Ray Wade and others (Videmus/Albany and Calvin).

Studies include solo piano with George Lucktenberg and Ian Hobson; collaborative arts with Martin Katz and Eckart Sellheim; fortepiano with Penelope Crawford; harpsichord with Edward Parmentier; Injury-Preventive Piano Technique with Barbara Lister-Sink; and additional studies with Theodore Lettvin, Louis Nagel and Jean Barr. She holds a Bachelor of Music degree in Piano Performance from Converse College, the Master of Music in Piano Performance from the University of Illinois, a Graduate Certificate in Injury-Preventive Piano Technique from Salem College and the Doctor of Musical Arts in Collaborative Piano from the University of Michigan.