

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 both in person and live virtually at the first four International Conferences on Women's Work in Music in Bangor, Wales since 2017, at the 2002 International Workshops in Stavanger, Norway and at the 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 three Cds of works by women composers on the Albany Records (Parma Recordings) label. Sixteen of these recorded 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.

Violinist Laura Kobayashi is a member of the Kobayashi/Gray Duo, Cirrus Ensemble and the Main Street Chamber Players and actively performs throughout the United States. Significant U.S. performances have included appearances at the Piccolo Spoleto Festival in Charleston, South Carolina; the Embassy of Bulgaria in Washington, D.C.; Merkin Concert Hall and Alice Tully Hall in NYC and Gindi Auditorium in Los Angeles. She has performed in numerous music festivals in the United States, 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 Argentina and the Chiang Rai Youth Orchestra in Thailand. She is a founding member of the Main Street Music Studios in Fairfax, VA where she maintains a private studio of violin students. Awards include 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. She has served on the faculties of West Virginia University, the San Francisco Conservatory of Music, the University of Georgia, and the University of Nebraska at Omaha. In addition, she has played as a member of the second violin section in the San Francisco Opera Orchestra. She earned her degrees from The Juilliard School, Yale University and The University of Michigan.

Susan Keith Gray, an acclaimed collaborative pianist, has performed throughout the United States and in Japan, Panama, Taiwan, South Korea, Norway, Thailand and South Africa. Solo acknowledgements include prizes in the MTNA Collegiate Artist Competition, and appearances with the South Dakota Symphony, Dakota Chamber Orchestra, Spartanburg Symphony, and Savannah Symphony. In addition to the Duo, collaborations include recitals with many singers and instrumentalists and twenty-nine years as pianist with the University of South Dakota Rawlins Piano Trio. She has served on collaborative piano faculties at the Music Academy of the West, Brancaloni International Music Festival in Piobbico, Italy and for national competitions. Performance specialties include music of women composers, American piano trios and African American Art Song that she has recorded on the Azica, Albany, Mark Masters and Videmus labels. She served as keynote speaker for the first biennial Piano Pedagogy Symposium at the Hong Kong Institute of Education in 2009. Gray is Professor Emeritus of the University of South Dakota where she was a recipient of the Belbas-Larson Award for Excellence in Teaching and the Knutson Distinguished Faculty Award for the College of Fine Arts. She taught piano and pedagogy and founded the graduate program in Collaborative Piano. Her degrees are in piano performance from Converse College and the University of

Illinois and a DMA in Chamber Music and Accompanying from The University of Michigan. In 2019, she completed a certificate in Injury-Preventive Piano Technique.