

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 has presented at the International Conferences on Women's Work in Music in Bangor, Wales, the 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 in Thailand, South Africa, South America, and the West Indies. Notable US performance venues include the Dame Myra Hess Series, 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 several museum series. 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 thirty 19th to 21st century women composers. The Duo has two previous CDs of works by women composers--**Feminissimo! Women Playing Music by Women** and **Boldly Expressive! Music by Women**. 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.

Violinist Laura Kobayashi is a member of the Kobayashi/Gray Duo 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. 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. She earned her degrees from The Juilliard School, Yale University and The University of Michigan.

Susan Keith Gray has performed throughout the United States, Japan, Panama, Taiwan, and South Korea. Solo acknowledgements include prizes in the MTNA Collegiate Artist Competition, and appearances with orchestras including the South Dakota Symphony, Dakota Chamber Orchestra, Spartanburg Symphony, and Savannah Symphony. An acclaimed collaborative pianist, for 29 years she was a member of the University of South Dakota Rawlins Piano Trio. Other collaborations include recitals with violinists Anna Vayman and Scott St. John, cellist Keith Robinson, bassist Barry Greene, flutists Linda Chatterton and Martha Cuncell, trumpeter Joe Burgstaller and singers Carla Connors and Scott Piper. She has served on collaborative piano faculties at the Music Academy of the West, Brancalonei International Music Festival in Piobbico, Italy and 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 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. In addition to teaching piano and pedagogy, she founded and directed 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 the certificate in Injury-Preventive Piano Technique with Barbara Lister-Sink.