

## CASSATT STRING QUARTET - Individual Bios 2022-2023

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**Violinist Muneko Otani** serves on the faculty of Columbia University and Williams College; and is assistant to Lewis Kaplan at the Mannes College of Music. She has also taught at the Mozarteum Summer Academy in Salzburg.

As the first violinist of the Cassatt String Quartet since 1986, she has appeared in the U.S., Canada, and Mexico, as well as in Europe and Asia. Major venues have included Lincoln Center, the Kennedy Center, the Library of Congress, Palacio de Bellas Artes, and the Bastille Opera House.

As a chamber musician, she has collaborated with Walter Trampler, Martin Lovett, Marc Johnson, Paul Katz, Kazuhide Isomura, Ursula Oppens, Masuko Ushioda, Colin Carr, and Lawrence Lesser.

Ms. Otani has held fellowships at the Banff Centre, the Tanglewood Music Center, and Norfolk Chamber Music Festival; and at Yale University, as assistant to the Tokyo Quartet.

She has served as a panelist for the Juilliard Concerto Competition, the 2019 Postacchini International Violin competition, the Barlow Prize for composition, and Chamber Music America's Residency Program.

Ms. Otani received a Bachelor of Music degree in both Performance and Education from the Toho Academy of Music in Japan, where she studied with Toshiya Eto. She continued her training at the New England Conservatory, where her principal teachers were Masuko Ushioda and Louis Krasner.

Ms. Otani plays a 1770 J. B. Guadagnini of Parma violin.

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**Violinist Jennifer Leshnower**, who joined the Cassatt String Quartet in 1994 as second violinist, has performed in North and Central America, Europe, and Asia. She is also the founding director of Cassatt in the Basin!, an educational chamber music residency established in 2005 in her hometown of Odessa, Texas.

A former member of the Thouvenel String Quartet, Ms. Leshnower has concertized with members of the Cleveland, Tokyo, Vermeer, Orion and Amadeus Quartets, pianists Marc-André Hamelin, Ursula Oppens and Lydia Artymiw, flutist Ransom Wilson and cellist Colin Carr among others. She has championed new music, having collaborated with leading 21st-century

composers including John Corigliano, Kaija Saariaho, Joan Tower, Augusta Read Thomas, Yehudi Wyner and Peter Schikele.

Ms. Leshnower coaches chamber music worldwide including masterclasses in Italy's Orvieto Musica, Mexico's San Miguel Chamber Music Festival, Ireland's Trinity College and Royal Irish Academy of Music, Bowdoin International Music Festival, Syracuse University, and the University of Pennsylvania. In 2006, she had the opportunity to perform at the Library of Congress on the Library's "Ward" Stradivari (1700).

Leshnower trained at the Shepherd School of Music at Rice University with Sergiu Luca, and the Peabody Conservatory with Sylvia Rosenberg. She participated in the Meadowmount and Aspen Music Festivals, the National Repertory Orchestra having coached with members of the Guarneri, Tokyo and Juilliard Quartets.

Ms. Leshnower performs on a 1655 Jacobus Stainer violin.

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**Violist Rosemary Nelis** has performed as chamber musician and soloist throughout the United States and Europe, and joined the Cassatt String Quartet in 2022. Highlights of Ms. Nelis's recent and current seasons include performances of the complete middle and late Beethoven string quartets; solo recitals of works by Kenji Bunch, Elliott Carter, and Dorothy Rudd Moore; and several important premieres, including the North American premiere of Jörg Widmann's String Quartet No. 7, *Study on Beethoven II*, and the world premiere of Roger Tapping's string quartet, *Reverberations*.

Nelis has worked with composers Missy Mazzoli, David Lang, Christine Southworth, Marcelo Zarvos, Jefferson Friedman, Dan Visconti, Andy Akiho, Kenji Bunch, Don Byron, James MacMillan, Brett Dean, Yu-Hui Chang, Jörg Widmann, and Joan Tower. She studied composition both with Ms. Tower and John Halle. As a baroque violist, she has appeared with The Sebastians, BaroqueLyn, and with Juilliard415, with whom she performed on a Scandinavian tour in 2019.

Ms. Nelis received both Bachelor of Music and Bachelor of Arts degrees from Bard College and Conservatory of Music, where she studied with Steven Tenenbom and majored in Chinese Language and Literature. Ms. Nelis was the proud recipient of a Kovner Fellowship during her Masters studies at The Juilliard School, where she worked with Roger Tapping and Misha Amory. She also spent time at the University of Glasgow, Qingdao University, and Yale School of Music, working with violists Duncan Ferguson and Ettore Causa. Nelis has spent summers performing chamber music at Yellow Barn, Bard Music Festival and Kneisel Hall.

A devoted teacher, Ms. Nelis has served on the faculty of Kinhaven Music School, and works privately as a mentor to young violists and chamber music groups.

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**Cellist Gwen Krosnick**, who joined the Cassatt Quartet in 2022, has appeared across the world as recitalist, chamber musician, and exuberant advocate for music. She is known for her luminous voice; her smoldering intensity; and for her deep, burnished palette of sounds at the cello. Krosnick's recent projects include the Boston Beethoven Cycle at Pucker Gallery: a chronological journey of the complete Beethoven string quartets with contemporary works interspersed, curated with her violinist colleague Ari Isaacman-Beck. She has played recitals across the East Coast and Midwest, both alone and with pianists Qing Jiang, Daniel Walden, Lee Dionne, and Emely Phelps. Krosnick's current and recent seasons include dozens of premieres and major performances of contemporary music, including solo works by Jeffrey Mumford, Richard Wernick, Lei Liang, Ralph Shapey, Elliott Carter, Charles Wuorinen, Roger Sessions, Donald Martino, and Sofia Gubaidulina; and chamber music by James Lee III, Zhou Long, Coleridge-Taylor Perkinson, Dylan Schneider, Daniel Godfrey, Shulamit Ran, Tania León, Ezequiel Viñao, and Dorothy Rudd Moore.

Krosnick was the founding cellist of Trio Cleonice, with which group she performed across the United States, Europe, and Asia from 2008 to 2016. Cleonice was in residence at the New England Conservatory from 2011 to 2014; gave frequent premieres and championed lesser-known works of the piano trio repertoire; and began an acclaimed community concert series, *Trio Cleonice & Friends*, which presented monthly mixed chamber music programs – ranging from Bach's *Musical Offering* to world premieres – to a devoted regular audience.

Gwen Krosnick is a double-degree graduate of Oberlin College and Conservatory, where she earned a Bachelor of Arts degree in Russian alongside her cello studies; her Master of Music degree is from New England Conservatory. Her teachers included Natasha Brofsky, Vivian Weilerstein, Roger Tapping, and Donald Weilerstein at NEC; Darrett Adkins and Brian Alegant at Oberlin; and Seymour Lipkin and Laurie Smukler at Kneisel Hall. Krosnick has taught at Oberlin Conservatory of Music, Vivace Cello Festival, New England Conservatory Preparatory Division, the New York Youth Symphony Chamber Music Program, and Junior Greenwood; and given masterclasses at institutions such as Eastman, Bard, Oberlin, the Cleveland Institute of Music, and Duke. Krosnick now teaches at Kneisel Hall, where she has served as Artist-Faculty since 2019.