

The		Daniel Stepner
Lydian		Judith Eissenberg
String		Mary Ruth Rav
Quartet		Joshua Gordon

## Lydian Biographies

Since its formation in 1980, the Lydian String Quartet has inspired critical acclaim worldwide. The Quartet's special flair and interpretive mastery of standard and contemporary repertoire has won the ensemble prizes at international competitions in Canada, France, England and in New York (the prestigious Naumburg Award for Chamber Music). The Lydians give compelling and vividly dramatic performances of the quartet literature, based on an exploration and deep understanding of the composer's expression and craft. The Lydians bring to life music spanning two and a half centuries through concerts, recordings, workshops, lectures and master classes. Their programming of old and new, formal and informal, strives to build new audiences for the spiritually refreshing world of chamber music.

The Lydian String Quartet has performed extensively throughout the United States at venues such as Lincoln Center, the Kennedy Center and the Library of Congress, Jordan Hall and Weill Recital Hall in New York. Abroad the Quartet has made appearances in France, England, Italy, Switzerland, Germany, Russia, and Armenia. During the summer months the Quartet has been heard at such festivals as the Norfolk Festival (CT) and Music From Salem (NY).

In 2007 the LSQ launched their multi-year project "Around the World in a String Quartet," a new concert series that explores string quartet music in global settings within and beyond the European tradition. From 2001 to 2006, the LSQ's five-year project "Vienna and the String Quartet" surveyed the heart of the string quartet repertory. Juxtaposing new and old Vienna on each program, the Lydians featured music of Haydn, Mozart, Beethoven, Schubert, Brahms, Wolf, Kreisler, Schoenberg, Webern, and Berg, along with contemporary composers responding to this tradition such as Harbison, Martino, and Persichetti. The 2000-2001 season was dedicated to works which celebrated Jewish culture, including such composers as Bloch, Boykan, Wyner, Shostakovich, Golijov and Leo Ornstein.

Essential to the spirit of the Lydians is the commissioning and recording of new works. Their five-year "American Originals" Project, from 1995-2000, featured the rich repertoire of the 20th-Century American string quartet. During that time they performed or recorded over sixty works by American composers, often accompanying their concerts with workshops, lectures and discussions.

Winners of a Chamber Music America/ASCAP Award for Adventurous Programming, the Quartet has also received grants from the Meet the Composer/Rockefeller Foundation/AT&T Jazz Program in partnership with the National Endowment for the Arts, and numerous awards from the Aaron Copland Fund for Music.

The Lydian Quartet can be heard on twenty-six recordings of music from Schubert and Brahms through Hyla, Boykan, Ornstein, Wyner and Harbison. Their recording of John Harbison's String Quartet No. 3 and "The Rewaking" was chosen by both the New York Times and the Boston Globe as one of the best recordings of 2001. Their latest recording of the complete string quartets of Vincent Persichetti was the recipient of a Copland Fund grant and was released by Centaur in 2006.

The members of the Lydian String Quartet are on the faculty of Brandeis University, in Waltham, Massachusetts.

The		Daniel Stepner	
Lydian		Judith Eissenberg	
String		Mary Ruth Ray	
Quartet		Joshua Gordon	

## Daniel Stepner













Grammy-nominated musician Daniel Stepner is the first violinist for the Lydian String Quartet, replacing Wilma Smith in 1987. He earned his second Grammy nomination in 2005 for best small ensemble performance (with or without conductor) for his work on world-premiere recordings of retired Brandeis music professor Yehudi Wyner's "The Mirror/Passover Offerings." Stepner, an artist-in-residence on the faculty at Brandeis, is a member of the Boston Museum Trio and concertmaster of the Handel and Haydn Society. During the summers, he serves as artistic director of the Aston Magna Festival in the Berkshires. As a touring musician, he has played in 11 countries in Western Europe and the former Soviet Union, and throughout Australia and the United States. He has performed and recorded a wide repertoire of period and contemporary instruments. In addition to the Lydian String Quartet's many recordings, he has recorded chamber music by Buxtehude, Bach, Marais, Rameau, Vivaldi, Telemann, Mozart, Schubert, and Charles Ives. He studied with Steven Staryk in Chicago, with Nadia Boulanger in France, and with Broadus Erle at Yale.

## Judith Eissenberg

Judith Eissenberg is a founding member and second violinist of the Lydian String Quartet, in residence at Brandeis since 1980. With the quartet, she has won numerous international prizes, including the Naumburg Award for Excellence in Chamber Music, commissioned new works, and has toured extensively in the United States and abroad. A performer on both modern and period instruments, she has been a member and soloist with the Handel and Haydn Society Orchestra and has appeared with other performing organizations, including the Boston Chamber Music Society, The Boston Conservatory Chamber Players, Emmanuel Music, Boston Pops, and Boston Baroque. She is a founding member and a codirector of Music From Salem, a chamber music festival in upstate New York that was established in 1987. At Brandeis, she founded and directs MusicUnitesUs, an innovative outreach program that brings public school students to the Brandeis campus for a series of diverse music performances that reflect social studies lessons in the classroom.

## Mary Ruth Ray

An original member of the Lydian String Quartet, violist Mary Ruth Ray is an internationally known performer who has received critical acclaim throughout the United States, Europe and Russia. She has been an artist-in-residence on the faculty of Brandeis since 1980, teaching viola and chamber music, and serves as director of the Performance Program at Brandeis. An active soloist and chamber musician, she has performed as guest artist with the Boston Symphony Orchestra, the Bard Music Festival, Apple Hill Chamber Players, Boston Musica Viva and Juneau Jazz and Classics, and was invited to present a featured concert/demonstration of the Bach Cello Suites for the 13th International Viola Congress. As member and soloist with Emmanuel Music in Boston, Ray has performed the complete cycle of more than 200 sacred cantatas by Bach as well as chamber music of Debussy, Brahms and Schubert. She is a recording artist with CRI, Nonesuch, Centaur, Harmonia Mundi, and New World Records.

The			Daniel Stepner	
Lydian			Judith Eissenberg	
String			Mary Ruth Rav	
Quartet			Joshua Gordon	

## Joshua Gordon

Cellist Joshua Gordon joined the Lydian String Quartet in 2002 and is an artist-in-residence on the faculty at Brandeis. Gordon has earned acclaim for his work as a soloist and chamber musician in the United States, Canada, the Caribbean, Australia, Europe, Japan, and South America. He has been a member of the New York Chamber Soloists, the Group For Contemporary Music, and the New Millennium Ensemble, and has been a guest of the Cassatt and Ying Quartets, the Chameleon Arts Ensemble, Emmanuel Music, the Fromm Chamber Players at Harvard University, the New York Festival of Song, the North Country Chamber Players, the Orpheus Chamber Orchestra, and Speculum Musicae. In Boston he is heard regularly as principal cellist of the New England String Ensemble. Gordon has played recitals in New York City's Merkin Hall, Weill Hall, and the Museum of Modern Art, and at the University of California at San Diego and the University of Maryland at College Park. He is an alumnus of the Juilliard School and the Tanglewood Music Center; his principal teachers were Harvey Shapiro, Joel Krosnick, and the Juilliard Quartet, with whom he appeared on the PBS program "Live From Lincoln Center: Juilliard at 80." As a Lydian, Gordon can be heard on a Centaur Records CD in the four quartets of Vincent Persichetti and on a new Centaur release of John Harbison's Third and Fourth Quartets; with the pianist Randall Hodgkinson, he plays on a critically acclaimed 2007 release from New World Records, "Leo Ornstein: Complete Works For Cello and Piano." He is also featured on recordings from Albany Records, CRI, Cala, Koch International Classics, Naxos, and Tzadik.

