

Described by Strad Magazine as being « vigorous, extrovert and emphatic players with a vitality all their own », the young Nisaika Quartet, all barely 20 years old, had just received the « Deuxième Prix » at the « 8e Concours International de Quatuors à Cordes » in Evian, France, (later to become the Bordeaux International String Quartet Competition) from a jury presided by the great Polish composer Witold Lutoslawski, and comprising among others of cellist Claus Adam (Juilliard String Quartet), Hatto Beyerle (Alban Berg Quartet), Paolo Borciani (Quartetto Italiano), Milan Skampa (Smetana Quartet) and the entire Borodine Quartet. This was in 1983. This foursome of chamber-music-hungry friends and classmates at the Curtis Institute of Music had decided to spend most of the previous year locking themselves into rehearsal studios for marathon work sessions of Mozart, Beethoven and Bartok. With the support of their coaches Karen Tuttle and Felix Galimir, they lived one of the great adventures of their musical lives.

Being young and in full development, the quartet disbanded to pursue graduate studies and job opportunities, yet somehow remained connected for all these decades, collaborating and performing during summer festivals, subbing for one another during sabbatical and maternity leaves, founding other ensembles. But their association marked them deeply and started defining their identity. Several of the choices they made then were an example of their idealism. At a time where only the Emerson String Quartet traded violin seats, the Nisaika followed suit. They chose a name that was all-inclusive, the word Nisaika meaning « we, us, our » in Chinook pidgin, a trading language of the Pacific Northwest including elements of French, English, Salishan and other indigenous languages.

Violinist David Salness threw a bottle in the ocean a year ago with the idea of a reunion tour in 2025-26, which was pretty rapidly and enthusiastically embraced by the whole group. Here is who they are:

An artist deeply dedicated to the range of violin and chamber music repertoire, **violinist Violaine Melançon** is sought after both as a performer and a pedagogue. She teaches at the Schulich School of Music at McGill University where she is Associate Professor of Violin, and regularly gives masterclasses and guest teaches at major peer institutions like the New England Conservatory in Boston, the Glenn Gould School in Toronto, the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland and the Guildhall School for Music and Drama in London, UK.

She served until 2019 on the faculty of the Peabody Conservatory in Baltimore. Violaine was until 2016 and during the ensemble's life span, the founding violinist of the

Peabody Trio, ensemble-in-residence at the Peabody Conservatory and the Yellow Barn Center for Chamber Music, and with them actively performed internationally.

These days, Domaine Forget International Music and Dance Academy, the Green Mountain Chamber Music Festival, and the Summer Violin Institute at Northwestern University Bienen School of Music in Chicago are where she teaches during the summer months.

Violaine performs as well on baroque violin and enjoys collaborating in concert with many Canadian and American early music performers. Her performances can be heard on the Naxos, Artek, CRI, and New World Records labels.

www.violainemelancon.com

Violinist David Salness has attained international recognition as a performing artist and teacher. He has appeared in more than 30 countries and in virtually the entire United States in such renowned venues as Carnegie Hall, Lincoln Center, Orchestra Hall in Chicago, Paris's Salle Gaveau and London's Wigmore Hall. His performances are broadcast on National Public Radio, Radio France, and the British and Canadian Broadcast Corporations. His recordings are found on the RCA, BMG, Telarc and Centaur labels, amongst others.

Salness was for twelve years a member of the critically acclaimed Audubon Quartet. He has worked with iconic composers such as Luciano Berio, George Crumb, Krystof Penderecki, Peter Schickele, and John Cage, while premiering countless works throughout his career. A sought-after collaborator, Salness has performed with members of the Guarneri, Cleveland, Juilliard Quartets and is currently the first violinist with the Left Bank Quartet, appearing frequently in the greater Washington, D.C. area performing in the leading venues: Kennedy Center, National Gallery, the Smithsonian and Strathmore Hall. Salness has been concertmaster of Northern Virginia's Fairfax Symphony Orchestra for 28 years.

An alumnus of the Interlochen Arts Academy, and the Curtis Institute, Salness studied with David Cerone, Jascha Brodsky, Ivan Galamian, Joseph Gingold and Karen Tuttle. Salness has served as Artist Faculty at the Meadowmount School, Distinguished Teacher of Violin at the Brevard Music Center and chamber music program director at the Chautauqua festival. The longtime Director of Chamber Music Activities at the University of Maryland, he is currently Professor of Violin.

PETER STUMPF is Professor of **Cello** at the Indiana University Jacobs School of Music. Prior to this appointment, he was principal cellist of the Los Angeles Philharmonic. Mr. Stumpf's tenure in Los Angeles followed twelve years as associate principal cellist of the Philadelphia Orchestra. A dedicated chamber musician, he has appeared on the

chamber music series at Carnegie Hall, Alice Tully Hall, Kennedy Center, the Boston Celebrity Series, Walt Disney Concert Hall in Los Angeles, the Concertgebouw in Amsterdam, the Philharmonie in Cologne, and Casals Hall in Tokyo. He has performed with the chamber music societies of Boston, Chicago, and Philadelphia, and at numerous festivals, including Marlboro, Santa Fe, Bridgehampton, and Ravinia. He has toured with Music from Marlboro, and with pianist Mitsuko Uchida in performances of the complete Mozart Piano Trios, and has collaborated with the Emerson and Guarneri Quartets. Concerto appearances have been with the Boston Symphony, the Philadelphia Orchestra, the Los Angeles Philharmonic, and the Boston Philharmonic and at the Aspen Festival among others. As a recitalist, he has performed at Jordan Hall in Boston, the Phillips and Corcoran Galleries in Washington, DC, and on the Philadelphia Chamber Music Society series as well as the Chamber Music in Historic Sites series in the Los Angeles. His awards include first prize in the Washington International Competition.

EDWARD GAZOULEAS, violist (see <https://www.edgazouleas.com/>)