

Kaija Saariaho is a prominent member of a group of Finnish composers and performers who are now, in mid-career, making a worldwide impact. She studied composition in Helsinki, Freiburg and Paris, where she has lived since 1982. Her studies and research at IRCAM have had a major influence on her music and her characteristically luxuriant and mysterious textures are often created by combining live music and electronics.

Although much of her catalogue comprises chamber works, from the mid-nineties she has turned increasingly to larger forces and broader structures, such as the operas *L'Amour de Loin*, *Adriana Mater* and *Emilie*. Around the operas there have been other vocal works, notably the ravishing *Château de l'âme* (1996), *Oltra mar* (1999), *Quatre instants* (2002), *True Fire* (2014). The oratorio *La Passion de Simone*, portraying the life and death of the philosopher Simone Weil, formed part of Sellars's international festival 'New Crowned Hope' in 2006/07. The chamber version of the oratorio was premiered by La Chambre aux echos at the Bratislava Melos Ethos Festival in 2013.

Saariaho has claimed the major composing awards in The Grawemeyer Award, The Wihuri Prize, The Nemmers Prize, The Sonning Prize, The Polar Music Prize. In 2018 she was honoured with the BBVA Foundation's Frontiers of Knowledge Award. In 2015 she was the judge of the Toru Takemitsu Composition Award. Always keen on strong educational programmes, Kaija Saariaho was the music mentor of the 2014-15 Rolex Mentor and Protégé Arts Initiative and was in residence at U.C. Berkeley Music Department in 2015.

Saariaho continues to collaborate for the stage. *Only The Sound Remains*, her most recent opera collaboration with Peter Sellars, was premiered in Amsterdam in 2016. In the same year her first opera *L'Amour de Loin* was presented in its New York premiere by the Metropolitan Opera in a new production by Robert Le Page. The Park Avenue Armory and New York Philharmonic presented a celebration of her orchestral music with visual accompaniment. February 2017 saw Paris come alive with her work when she was featured composer of Radio France Festival Presences.

Her new opera, *Innocence*, will be premiered in July 2021 at Festival International d'Art Lyrique d'Aix-en-Provence.