

# Laura Kaminsky, Composer

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## BIOGRAPHY - 1000 WORDS

Cited in *The Washington Post* as “one of the top 35 female composers in classical music,” Laura Kaminsky frequently addresses critical social and political issues in her work, including sustainability, war, and human rights. She possesses “an ear for the new and interesting” (*The New York Times*) and “her music is full of fire as well as ice, contrasting dissonance and violence with tonal beauty and meditative reflection. It is strong stuff.” (*American Record Guide*).

Her first opera, *As One*, (2014; co-librettists Mark Campbell & Kimberly Reed) is the most widely-produced contemporary opera in North America since the 2016-17 season, with almost three dozen different productions to its credit. “*As One* is a piece that haunts and challenges its audience with questions about identity, authenticity, compassion, and the human desire for self-love and peace” (*Opera News*). The *As One* team has since been commissioned twice—by Houston Grand Opera for *Some Light Emerges* (2017) and Opera Parallèle/American Opera Projects for *Today It Rains* that premiered in San Francisco’s Z Space (2019).

She is currently working on a new opera with Reed, *Hometown to the World*, inspired by the devastating Immigration and Customs Enforcement raid in Postville, IA in 2008, commissioned by the Opera For All Voices Consortium, led by Santa Fe and San Francisco Operas, for a fall 2020 San Francisco premiere. Her *Piano Quintet* for Ursula Oppens and the Cassatt String Quartet will soon be recorded along with her *Piano Concerto, Fantasy*, and a new work for piano four-hands for an *Oppens Plays Kaminsky* cd.

Grants, awards and fellowships include those from the National Endowment for the Arts, Koussevitzky Music Foundation, Opera America, Chamber Music America, BAM/Kennedy Center De Vos Institute, William and Flora Hewlett Foundation, Aaron Copland Fund, Virgil Thomson Foundation, Newburgh Institute for Art and Ideas, Roger Shapiro Fund for New Music, American Music Center, USArtists International, CEC ArtsLink International Partnerships, Likhachev-Russkiy Mir Foundation Cultural Fellowship, Kenan Institute for the Arts, Artist Trust, New York State Council on the Arts, Bronx Arts Council, Arts Westchester, North Carolina Arts Council, Seattle Arts Commission, and Meet the Composer. She has received six ASCAP-Chamber Music

America Awards for Adventurous Programming, a citation from the Office of the President of the Borough of Manhattan, the 2016 Polish Gold Cross of Merit (Złoty Krzyż Zasługi RP), a decoration awarded by the President of Poland for exemplary public service or humanitarian work, and the Polish Ministry of Culture National Heritage 2010 Chopin Award. She has been a fellow at the Hermitage Artist Retreat, Virginia Center for the Creative Arts, Centrum Foundation, Dorland Mountain Arts Colony, Millay Colony for the Arts, and the Camargo Foundation in France.

Kaminsky's works are frequently performed across the U.S. and abroad. Her music has been presented in New York at BAM, Miller Theater, Bargemusic, The Greene Space, Subculture, Merkin Concert Hall, Here Arts Center, Weill Recital Hall, Symphony Space, Skirball Center, Greenwich House, Tenri Cultural Center, Austrian Cultural Forum, New York Society for Ethical Culture, Robert Miller Gallery, and the 92nd Street Y, among other venues. Internationally, she has been featured at Wigmore Hall and King's Place (London); Glinka Hall, Rimsky-Korsakov Conservatory of Music, and Dostoevsky Museum (Russia); Fundacion Juan March (Madrid); Naregatsi Art Institute and Philharmonic Hall (Yerevan, Armenia); Forum of Contemporary Music Leipzig and Ballsaal-Studio Berlin (Germany), Bratislava Conservatory of Music (Slovakia); Vernissage Salzburg (Austria); and the American Embassy in Ghana among others.

She has been a featured composer at Boston, Oberlin, Purchase and Shanghai Conservatories; North Carolina School of the Arts; Peabody Institute of Music; Mannes College of Music; Westminster Choir College; Cornish College of the Arts; CalArts; Longy School of Music; Cincinnati Conservatory of Music; Tisch School of the Arts/NYU; The Juilliard School; Hartt School of Music; Bard, Hunter, St. Olaf's, Doane, Earlham, Augustana, and Sarah Lawrence Colleges; Carnegie Mellon University; Universities of Colorado, Minnesota, North Carolina, Oregon, Pittsburgh, Puget Sound, Puerto Rico, Utah, Washington; and the National Academies of Music of Armenia, Ghana and Slovakia; at the Wolfson Center for National Affairs at the New School; Vernon Center for International Affairs at New York University; and at festivals including the Seattle Chamber Music Festival; Soundfest Summer Institute and Festival (Cape Cod); Green Mountain Chamber Music Festival (VT); Seal Bay Chamber Music Festival, Bar Harbor and Atlantic Music Festivals (ME); Connecticut Summerfest; International Festival (Skopje, Macedonia); International Festival of Women Composers (São Paulo, Brazil); and Casalmaggiore International Music Festival (Italy); among others.

Kaminsky has been a panelist and/or adjudicator for the NEA, New York State Council on the Arts, New York City Department of Cultural Affairs, Chamber Music America, Opera America, New England Foundation for the Arts, CEC ArtsLink, Yaddo, Meet The

Composer, American Music Center, Newmusic USA, Cary Trust, Creative Capital, USArtists International, and other organizations.

Currently Composer Mentor for Washington National Opera's American Opera Initiative, she is head of composition at the Conservatory of Music Purchase College/SUNY, where she served as dean from 2004–2008. Previously she was chair of the music department at Cornish College of the Arts in Seattle, and in New York held the positions of Artistic Director of Symphony Space, Director of Music and Theatre Programs at The New School, Artistic Director of Town Hall, and Associate Director of Humanities at the 92nd Street Y. As Artistic Director of the European Mozart Academy, based in Poland, she presented concerts throughout Eastern Europe in 1996/97. She served as visiting faculty at the National Academy of Music in Ghana in 1992/93. Kaminsky serves on the boards of Opera America and the Hermitage Artist Retreat.

A native New Yorker, Kaminsky graduated from Fiorello H. LaGuardia High School of Music and Art, received her bachelor's degree magna cum laude from Oberlin College, and her master's degree from the City College of New York/CUNY, where she was a Tuch Foundation Fellow, studying with Mario Davidovsky.

**Scores:** Bill Holab Music

**Recordings:** Albany, Bridge, BSS, CRI, Capstone, Mode, and MSR labels. A complete list of available recordings can be viewed at the Buy CDs page on her website. Kaminsky is a BMI composer.