

# Laura Kaminsky, Composer

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## BIOGRAPHY - 565 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 produced contemporary opera in North America since the 2016-17 season, with close to 40 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 original cast recording on the BSS label was named one of the best new opera recordings of 2019 by *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* (2019).

With Reed, she has created *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 Santa Fe premiere. New operas include *Finding Wright* (librettist Andrea Fellows Walters) for Dayton Opera (2021) and *February* (co-librettist with novelist Lisa Moore) for Newfoundland’s Opera on the Avalon (2023).

Kaminsky is currently writing for the New York Festival of Song’s Suffrage-themed concert and a solo piano work for the American Pianists Association 2021 competition. An upcoming cd for Cedille Records features iconic pianist Ursula Oppens performing Kaminsky’s Piano Concerto with the ASU Symphony Orchestra (Jeffery Meyer, music director), her Piano Quintet with the Cassatt String Quartet, the solo *Fantasy*, and *Reckoning: Five Miniatures for America* for piano four-hands, where Oppens is joined by Jerome Lowenthal.

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 Adventuresome 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 (France).

The 2019-2020 Composer Mentor for Washington National Opera's American Opera Initiative, she is head of composition at the Conservatory of Music Purchase College/SUNY. Kaminsky serves on the boards of Opera America and the Hermitage Artist Retreat.

**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.