



IN MEMORIAM
KAIJA SAARIAHO (1952–2023)



San Francisco Opera Mourns the Finnish Composer's Passing

SAN FRANCISCO, CA (June 2, 2023) —San Francisco Opera mourns the passing of composer Kaija Saariaho. The Finnish musician, whose brilliant instrumental and vocal works have reached a global audience, died peacefully at her home in Paris this morning. She was 70 years old.

San Francisco Opera Tad and Dianne Taube General Director Matthew Shilvock said:

“The San Francisco Opera family is heartbroken to learn of Kaija’s passing. She brought an extraordinary radiance to the world through her music and through her being. Her vast knowledge of instrumentation, the human voice and electronics allowed her to create works that connect us with our deepest selves, encapsulating the most profound nuances of human emotion in sound. To be with Kaija was to feel connected to humanity at a different level, and I will cherish the times I had with her as some of the most impactful of my life. We are so proud to be bringing *Innocence* to San Francisco a year from now and so grateful that *Adriana Mater* is at the San Francisco Symphony next week, both giving a chance for audiences to experience the astonishing power of Kaija’s artistry. We grieve the passing of one of the most

important artistic voices of our time and send deepest condolences to her husband Jean-Baptiste, and their children Aleksi and Aliisa.

Saariaho's 2018 opera, *Innocence*, created with librettist Sofi Oksanen and dramaturg and translator Aleksi Barrière, was jointly commissioned by the Aix-en-Provence Festival, London's Royal Opera House, Covent Garden, San Francisco Opera and the Dutch National Opera. The work, which had its world premiere at the Aix-en-Provence Festival in 2021, will be performed for the first time in the U.S. by San Francisco Opera in June 2024. For more information about *Innocence*, visit sfopera.com/innocence.

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For further press information, please contact:

Julia Inouye (415) 565-6430 / jinouye@sfopera.com

Jeffery McMillan (415) 565-6451 / jmcmillan@sfopera.com

Teresa Concepcion (415) 565-6470 / tconcepcion@sfopera.com