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| Saariaho, Kaija (1952 –) |
| [Enter any *variant forms* of your headword – OPTIONAL] |
| Finnish composer Kaija Saariaho initially studied in Heleski before moving on to Freiberg where she studied with Brian Ferneyhough and Klaus Huber among others. In 1982 she moved to Paris and began to work regularly at the musical research centre IRCAM. Early in her career she collaborated with Magnus Lindberg and Esa-Pekka Salonen to form the Finish new music ensemble Korvat Auki! (Ears Open!). |
| Finnish composer Kaija Saariaho initially studied in Heleski before moving on to Freiberg where she studied with Brian Ferneyhough and Klaus Huber among others. In 1982 she moved to Paris and began to work regularly at the musical research centre IRCAM. Early in her career she collaborated with Magnus Lindberg and Esa-Pekka Salonen to form the Finish new music ensemble Korvat Auki! (Ears Open!).  In the early eighties, her musical language focused on intricate harmonic structures that slowly transform over the course of the work. Verblendungen (1982-4) for orchestra and tape is the first work in which she integrated electronics and live performers. This piece shows her focus on gradual change over the course of the work as the structure consists of a drawn out diminuendo from an initial orchestral tutti.  Works of this period fit into the second wave of spectralism, following Tristan Murail and Gérard Grisey, where computers are used in the composition process to analyze the properties of a sound. This information is then used as the material for the composition. As Saariaho’s language matures the works begin to move further away from the initial plans from the computer generated material.  Extended playing techniques are utilized, in pieces such as *Nymph*é*a* (1987) for string quartet and electronics, to create complex sounds that are often the focal point of a work. *Nymph*é*a* shows the types of electronics common to her work such as synthetic sounds, modified recorded sounds, and real time sound processing. Saariaho’s music after the late eighties tend to be more expressive, and works such as *Château de l'âme* (1996) feature a quicker rate of change.  Throughout her career Saariaho has had an interest in the human voice, with players speaking in instrumental works, such as *Nymph*é*a,* as well as vocal works with or without instruments. Often she plays with the syllabic makeup of words and sounds found in various languages. *From the Grammar of Dreams* (1988), for two sopranos, shows her interest in the relation between instruments and the human voice as well as the same expansion and control of traditional playing techniques found with her instrumental writing. The text is drawn from the poetry of Paul Éluard.  Throughout the nineties she gradually explored the voice in larger forms cumulating with the operas L'Amour de loin (2000), Adriana Mater (2006) and Emilie (2010) all written with the librettist Amin Maalouf. Key Works Verblendungen - Orchestra - 1982-4  Lichtbogen - Nine Players and Electronics - 1986  *Nymph*é*a* - String Quartet and Electronics - 1987  *NoaNoa -* Flute and Electronics - 1992  *From the Grammar of Dreams -* Two Sopranos - 1988  *Du Cristal* - Orchestra and Live Electronics - 1989  *Près -* Cello and Electronics - 1992  *Graal théâtre -* Violin and Orchestra or Ensemble *-* 1994/1997  *Château de l'âme -* Soprano, Orchestra, and Chorus - 1996  L'Amour de loin - Opera -2000 |
| Further reading:  (Howell, Hargreaves and and Rofe)  (Moisala) |