

Press release, 06 October 2016

Golden trio of Festival Composers and Artists in Residence announced

The Bergen International Festival has announced its line-up of Festival Composers and Artists in Residence for the next three years: Finnish Kaija Saariaho in 2017, Russian Sofia Gubaidulina in 2018 and South Korean Unsuk Chin in 2019.

Planning years in advance is essential when inviting top shelf contemporary composers to your festival, which is just what the Bergen International Festival is doing. Kaija Saariaho, Sofia Gubaidulina and Unsuk Chin are all amongst today's most influential creators of new and classical music, and will put their distinct marks on the festival over the next three years.

'We are thrilled that these extraordinary composers have accepted our invitations and are very much looking forward to presenting musical portraits of them,' says Festival Director Anders Beyer.

Finland's first lady of music

Kaija Saariaho is Helsinki-born, but has been living in Paris since the early eighties. Her characteristically rich, polyphonic textures are often created by combining live music and electronics. Her residency and role as a Festival Composer next year coincides with the centenary of Finland's independence, providing an excellent opportunity to celebrate her music, which will be presented in different formats —chamber, operatic and orchestral — at various venues throughout the festival.

'I am happy to participate in the Bergen International Festival, an essential cornerstone in Nordic music life, as Artist in Residence in 2017. It is inspiring to be featured in this festival, celebrating art of the past, of today and of the future,' Saariaho says.

Performances of these Saariaho works during the 2017 Festival are the first to be launched:

- [La Passion de Simone](#)

Chamber version for ensemble, soprano solo and vocal ensemble.
Cornerteateret, 31 May 2017.

- [Jakob Kullberg with Aliisa Barrière](#)

Featuring the world premiere of the full version of *Concordia* for violin and cello, performed by Danish cellist Jakob Kullberg and Finnish-French violinist Aliisa Barrière.
Håkonshallen, 30 May 2017.

- [Crescendo: London Sinfonietta](#)

The violin concerto *Graal Théâtre* will be performed by Peter Herresthal and the London Sinfonietta in Håkonshallen on 02 June 2017 and again in St. John Smith Square Church in London on 06 June.

In addition to these works, Saariaho's music will feature in the Festival Closing Concert and be performed by a range of first class musicians at the historic composers' homes of Edvard Grieg and Ole Bull. While in Bergen, Saariaho will give preconcert talks and lectures, and will participate in the Festival debate programme.

A Russian pioneer and a South Korean forerunner

Sofia Gubaidulina (born 1931), considered to be one of the leading representatives of new music from the former Soviet Union, fills the role of Festival Composer and Artist in Residence in 2018.

'The Bergen International Festival is without doubt one of the most ambitious and versatile festivals in Northern Europe. I look forward to 2018 with high expectations', says Gubaidulina.

Although South Korean composer Unsuk Chin was born in 1961, 30 years after Gubaidulina, her list of merits is impressive. Her very first large orchestral work was in fact premiered by the Bergen Philharmonic Orchestra in 1990, a year before her breakthrough. In 2019, she will be in Bergen as a Festival Composer and Artist in Residence.

'This wonderful festival has an extraordinary history, and the ambition and vision of the innumerable projects it has instigated in the arts is unrivalled. I am looking forward to our collaboration with great excitement,' she says.



Kaija Saariaho (left, *photo: Andrew Campbell*), Unsuk Chin (middle, *photo: Priska Ketterer*) and Sofia Gubaidulina (right, *photo: F. Hoffmann La Roche*) will all put their distinct marks on the Bergen International Festival over the next three years. [Download press photos here.](#)

About the Bergen International Festival

- The Bergen International Festival presents art in all its guises: Music, theatre, dance, opera and visual art. It is the largest of its kind in the Nordic countries.
- The 65th festival will take place between 24 May and 07 June 2017, with close to 300 events in 40 different venues.

For further information, please contact Communications Manager Kjersti Brown: +4791752 677/
kjerstib@fib.no

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