



Lara St. John to release new album *♀she/her/hers* on Ancalagon Records September 29, 2022



Featuring 17 original solo violin compositions written by 12 leading composers, including Laurie Anderson, Valerie Coleman, Gabriela Lena Frank, Jessica Meyer, Jessie Montgomery, Milica Paranosic and more, including 5 world premiere recordings.

The project is a part of St. John's larger mission to fight for women's rights and historically marginalized groups and to offer a voice to the voiceless.

St. John will launch the album with a performance in a Crypt in New York City, presented by Death of Classical.

For immediate release – New York, NY – Violinist **Lara St. John** will release her new album *♀she/her/hers* on September 29, 2022, on Ancalagon Records. The recording features 17 original solo violin compositions written by 12 leading composers, including Laurie Anderson, Valerie Coleman, Gabriela Lena Frank, Jessica Meyer, Jessie Montgomery, Milica Paranosic, Micheline Coulombe St. Marcoux, Laura de Rover, Melissa Dunphy and Adah Kaplan.

The project is a part St. John's larger ongoing mission to fight for women's rights and historically marginalized groups, stemming from her experience as a 14-year-old victim of sexual abuse when she was a student at the Curtis Institute of Music - an ordeal she revealed in a series of major media articles in 2019-20. Since then, St. John has worked to give a voice to the voiceless and to help victims of abuse come forward and reclaim their stories. She is currently working on a documentary entitled "Dear Lara", to be released next year, which looks at rape and child abuse at music schools in North America, Europe, and the United Kingdom, as well as the predators who commit these crimes and the people and institutions that enable and protect them.

Says St. John about the album: "As someone who is only too well aware of how the cards are stacked against women in music, I have spent a lot of time listening to works by those who have historically - and more recently - broken through the composition brotherhood. During the pandemic, I decided to record an album of solo violin works written by these remarkable women. Some were composed for me, some I arranged, and others I found to be impressive works of new violinistic ideas. Thus was created, with the help of my audio engineer Laura DeRover, *♀she/her/hers*."

The album will be launched with a performance in New York on September 29, taking place in the Crypt in Harlem and presented by Death of Classical.

Track Listing with Commentary by Lara St. John:

Milica Paranosic (b. 1968) - World Premiere Recording

Bubamara, 2021 (3:45)

"This is a world premiere recording, and the piece was written for me by Milica. She and I have been friends for decades, and since she is Serbian-American, we have spent many great evenings listening to Eastern European music. This original work is based on signature Serbian/Macedonian rhythmical structures."

Jessica Meyer (b. 1974)

Confronting the Sky, 2015 (4:30)

"Jessica Meyer is a New York City-born composer. I found this piece of hers to make very beautiful and ethereal use of violin."

Gabriela Lena Frank (b. 1972)

from Suite Mestiza:

Pinkillo Llorando, 2017 (2:25)

Tarqueada, 2017 (3:58)

Luciernagas, 2017 (3:18)

“I have always loved Peru, so I chose these particular three because of their subtle and original evocation of traditions and nature from Frank’s mother’s homeland of Peru.”

Adah Kaplan (b. 2006) - World Premiere Recording

Whitewashed, 2020 (2:13)

“In 2020, Adah Kaplan wrote a heartfelt piece she felt was a bit too hard to record herself - and she wrote to my website with a request for me to record it. I saw that she was a 14-year-old girl living in Philadelphia, which of course rang all sorts of bells, so I said sure, of course. Although it wasn’t exactly written for me, this is its world premiere recording.”

Valerie Coleman (b. 1970) - World Premiere Violin Arrangement & Recording

Danza de la Mariposa, 2011 (5:58)

“I’ve been a Valerie Coleman fan ever since I heard her ‘Red Clay Mississippi Delta’ years ago. Since she is so busy, I knew I wouldn’t be able to ask her for a new piece, but I found this great solo flute piece of hers and arranged it for violin.”

Laurie Anderson (b. 1947) - World Premiere Violin Arrangement

Statue of Liberty, 2001 (4:48)

“I met Laurie Anderson in 2017 while playing and later recording her ‘Quartet for Sol.’ I asked her if she had anything that she thought might suit this project, and she suggested ‘Statue of Liberty.’ After collecting some Tibetan bowls and listening to her recording many times, I created my own version of it. The addition of the mallet on the right arm interestingly adds a heaviness and intensity to the sound, and it’s all done in real-time with no use of multitrack recording.”

Melissa Dunphy (b. 1980) - World Premiere Recording

Kommós, 2011 (4:39)

“I found a copy of ‘Kommos’ on the doorstep after a night out, as I left Melissa’s Airbnb in 2018, with a note scrawled about how a Curtis graduate once rudely told her the piece was impossible to play. It is, of course, not so. The title means a ‘beating’ like the chest in the apex of a Greek play, either in terror, agony or joy.

She wrote, “seems you’ve had a lot of all that”.

Sophie-Carmen Eckhardt Gramatté (1899–1974)

Caprice # 2: Scherz, 1924 (1:58)

Caprice # 1: Die Kranke und die Uhr, 1924 (2:42)

Caprice # 5: Danse Marocaine, 1927 (3:27)

“I chose these three excellent caprices of hers because they are very evocative of their titles, as well as extremely violinistic. Eckhardt Gramatté was a Canadian composer, so as a Canadian, I’ve known of her my whole life.”

Micheline Coulombe St. Marcoux (1938–1985) - World Premiere Recording

Integration II, 1980 (6:25)

“I had been reading about St. Marcoux because of my interest in the Les Ondes Martenot (a theremin-like instrument she wrote for often). I found that she had a piece for solo violin and became intrigued. Although I do not often play serial or aleatoric music, I find this work to be, at the very least, on par with (if not even more original and interesting than) the solo violin works of Boulez or Stockhausen - her male contemporaries, who are much more frequently performed.”

Jessie Montgomery (b. 1981)

Rhapsody No. 2, 2020 (4:15)

“I’ve been a Jessie Montgomery fan since I first heard ‘Starburst’ some years ago. I found that she wrote a second *Rhapsody No. 2* for Michi Wiancko and thought it was great – so I added it to this project!”

Ana Sokolović (b. 1968)

Danza # 2, 1998 (5:24)

Danza # 4: Avec Ivresse, 1998 (2:05)

“Ana Sokolovic is a Serbian-Canadian composer, whom I have known for a while. Her works are always at the high end of difficulty, but always within the realm of possibility – once you work out the secrets. Here are two very cool ‘danzas’ of hers – the second one I chose because the tempo is marked “avec ivresse” (with drunkenness), and I thought... yah, I can do that.”

Laura de Rover (b. 1992) - World Premiere Recording

Together Alone, 2021 (3:16)

“During Covid-19, Laura and I created a lot of projects. We did audiovisual for the Atterbury House recital series, I played on some of her original songs, and she was my audio engineer for this album. So, I asked her to write something for just me – thus the creation of *Together Alone*. ”