



Photo by Carlin Ma available in high-res at [www.jensenartists.com/lisa-bielawa](http://www.jensenartists.com/lisa-bielawa)

**World Premiere of Composer Lisa Bielawa's  
*Fictional Migrations* performed by The Knights with  
Soloists Alex Sopp and Michael P. Atkinson**

**Presented by Naumburg Orchestral Concerts**

**Tuesday, June 18, 2019 at 7pm  
The Temple Emanu-El Streicker Center  
Fifth Avenue and 65th Street | New York, NY**

**Free admission with advance reservations, available [here](#).  
More information: <https://naumburgconcerts.org/concert/opening-concert/>**

**“[Lisa Bielawa has a] prodigious gift for mingling persuasive melodicism  
with organic experimentation” – *Time Out New York***

**Lisa Bielawa: [www.lisabelawa.net](http://www.lisabelawa.net)**

New York, NY – On **Tuesday, June 18, 2019 at 7pm**, the world premiere of composer-vocalist **Lisa Bielawa's** *Fictional Migrations* (for string orchestra, flute and horn) is featured on the opening concert of the 2019 **Naumburg Orchestral Concerts Summer Series**. **The Knights** commissioned the string orchestra version of *Fictional Migrations* and will present it with soloists **Alex Sopp** (flute/piccolo) and **Michael P. Atkinson** (horn), both founding members of The Knights. The performance is at **Temple Emanu-El** (Fifth Avenue and 65th Street), as the Naumburg Bandshell is currently closed for repairs.

Of The Knights' orchestral premiere and collaboration with Sopp and Atkinson, Bielawa says, “These two soloists have, through the work I've done with The Knights over the years, been partnering and inspiring my work for over a decade. It was time to honor them, and to join with The Knights in honoring them, by creating a version of *Fictional Migrations* for string orchestra and the two soloists. It is in effect a double concerto for two instruments that are seldom if ever featured together, but will always belong together in my mind because of these two remarkably gifted and adventurous players.”

Commissioned by the Seattle Chamber Music Society in 2017, Bielawa composed *Fictional Migrations* (originally for flute/piccolo, horn, and piano) in observance of the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Olivier Messiaen's death. An ornithologist as well as a composer, Messiaen wove actual birdsongs into many of his works. Bielawa does so too in her piece, explaining, “But – given my own ‘indoorsy’ orientation and lack of any authentic attachment to the birds in nature – they are made-up birds, ‘What if?’ birds, created in the spirit of speculative fiction. The six continuous sections of the piece bear subtitles to suggest possible bird embodiments to the players as they go. These birds exist in a world where prisoners fly out of captivity effortlessly, and we all magically transcend death and suffering. *Fictional Migrations* invites you to exist in this world, just for a little while, together.”

**About Lisa Bielawa:** Composer-vocalist Lisa Bielawa is a 2009 Rome Prize winner in Musical Composition. She takes inspiration for her work from literary sources and close artistic collaborations. *The New York Times* describes her music as, “ruminative, pointillistic and harmonically slightly tart.” She is the recipient of the 2017 Music Award from the American Academy of Arts & Letters, and she received a 2018 Los Angeles Area Emmy nomination for her unprecedented, made-for-TV-and-online opera *Vireo: The Spiritual Biography of a Witch's Accuser*.

In 2019, Bielawa became the inaugural Composer-in-Residence and Chief Curator at the new Philip Glass Institute (PGI) at The New School's Center of the Performing Arts. The PGI is a landmark partnership between The New School, the

Philip Glass Ensemble (PGE), and Bielawa, who began touring as the vocalist with the Ensemble in 1992. In 1997, she co-founded the MATA Festival, which celebrates the work of young composers. Bielawa served as Artistic Director of the San Francisco Girls Chorus from 2013-2018 and recently completed her residency at Grand Central Art Center in Santa Ana, California. She was named a William Randolph Hearst Visiting Artist Fellow at the American Antiquarian Society for 2018. Her discography includes albums on the Tzadik, TROY, Innova, BMOP/sound, Orange Mountain Music and Sono Luminus labels.

Bielawa's music is frequently performed throughout the US and Europe, with recent and upcoming highlights including two world premieres at the 2016 NY PHIL BIENNIAL, *Drama/Self Pity* premiered by the Orlando Philharmonic, performances as both composer and soloist at The Kennedy Center's *KC Jukebox* series, SHIFT Festival, and with violinist Jennifer Koh at National Sawdust. Bielawa's music can be found outside the concert hall as well: *Chance Encounter* was premiered by soprano Susan Narucki and The Knights in Lower Manhattan's Seward Park; and *Airfield Broadcasts*, a 60-minute work for hundreds of musicians, was premiered on the tarmac of the former Tempelhof Airport in Berlin in May 2013 and at Crissy Field in San Francisco in October 2013. Bielawa's *Vireo* was produced as part of Bielawa's artist residency at Grand Central Art Center in Santa Ana, California and in partnership with KCETLink and Single Cel. The opera was filmed at locations across the country, and featured over 350 musicians in support of its core cast. *Vireo* was broadcast online and on TV by KCET. *The Los Angeles Times* called it an opera, "unlike any you have seen before, in content and in form," and *San Francisco Classical Voice* described it as, "poetic and fantastical, visually stunning and relentlessly abstract." In February 2019, *Vireo* is released as a two CD + DVD box set on Orange Mountain Music, featuring all of the music and episodes. It is coming to the stage as *VIREO LIVE*, a hybrid film-opera experience in 2020. For more information, please visit [www.lisabielawa.net](http://www.lisabielawa.net).

**About the Knights:** The Grammy-nominated Knights are an orchestral collective, flexible in size and repertory, dedicated to transforming the concert experience. Engaging listeners and defying boundaries with programs that showcase the players' roots in the classical tradition and passion for artistic discovery, The Knights have "become one of Brooklyn's sterling cultural products... known far beyond the borough for their relaxed virtuosity and expansive repertory" (*New Yorker*)

Counted among the highlights from recent seasons are: a performance with Yo-Yo Ma at Caramoor; the recording of Prokofiev's Second Violin Concerto on master violinist Gil Shaham's Grammy-nominated 2016 release, *1930's Violin Concertos, Vol. 2*, as well as a North American tour with Shaham; residencies at Dartmouth, Penn State and Washington DC's Dumbarton Oaks; and a performance in the NY PHIL BIENNIAL along with the San Francisco Girls Chorus (led by composer Lisa Bielawa) and the Brooklyn Youth Chorus, which featured world premieres by Rome Prize-winner Bielawa, Pulitzer Prize-winner Aaron Jay Kernis, and Knights violinist and co-founder Colin Jacobsen. The ensemble made its Carnegie Hall debut in the New York premiere of the Steven Stucky/Jeremy Denk opera *The Classical Style*, and has toured the U.S. with banjo virtuoso Béla Fleck, and Europe with soprano Dawn Upshaw. In recent years The Knights have also collaborated with Itzhak Perlman, the Mark Morris Dance Group, Joshua Redman, Silk Road virtuoso Siamak Aghaei, and pipa virtuoso Wu Man. Recordings include 2015's "instinctive and appealing" (*The Times, UK*) *the ground beneath our feet* on Warner Classics, featuring the ensemble's first original group composition; an all-Beethoven disc on Sony Classical (their third project with the label); and 2012's "smartly programmed" (NPR) *A Second of Silence* for Ancalagon.

The Knights evolved from late-night chamber music reading parties with friends at the home of violinist Colin Jacobsen and cellist Eric Jacobsen. The Jacobsen brothers, who are also founding members of the string quartet Brooklyn Rider, serve as artistic directors of The Knights, with Eric Jacobsen as conductor. In December 2012, the Jacobsens were selected from among the nation's top visual, performing, media, and literary artists to receive a prestigious United States Artists Fellowship.

The Knights' roster boasts remarkably diverse talents, including composers, arrangers, singer-songwriters, and improvisers, who bring a range of cultural influences to the group, from jazz and klezmer to pop and indie rock music. The unique camaraderie within the group retains the intimacy and spontaneity of chamber music in performance.

**About Naumburg Orchestral Concerts:** Since 1905, the Naumburg Orchestral Concerts has continuously presented free, outdoor classical music concerts to New Yorkers of all walks of life. It is the oldest such concert series in the world. Named after founder and philanthropist Elkan Naumburg, who donated the Naumburg Bandshell to New York City in 1923, and inspired by his own ardent love of music, the series seeks to stimulate and encourage new and expanded audiences for classical music in the informal and beautiful setting of Central Park.