



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

## Composer-Vocalist Lisa Bielawa Presented in Concert by Adelphi University Performing Arts Center

Saturday, March 2, 2019 at 8pm  
Adelphi University PAC | Westermann Stage, Concert Hall  
1 South Avenue | Garden City, NY

Tickets (\$25; \$20 Adelphi Staff; \$15 Students; \$5 Adelphi Students) and more information: [https://events.adelphi.edu/au\\_event/new-music-xiv-lisa-bielawa/](https://events.adelphi.edu/au_event/new-music-xiv-lisa-bielawa/)

“[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)

Garden City, NY – On Saturday, March 2, 2019 at 8pm, composer-vocalist Lisa Bielawa performs an evening of her compositions with music faculty at Adelphi University’s Performing Arts Center Concert Hall (1 South Avenue). Joining Bielawa on the stage will be Andrea Christie (piano), Blanca Cecilia González (violin), Clara Kim (violin), Chieh-Fan Yiu (viola), and Deborah Sepe (cello).

The performance, entitled **New Music XIV: Lisa Bielawa**, includes selections from *Vireo* (2017); *Graffiti dell’amante* (2010) for string quartet and soprano; *The Hour and the Poet* (2010) for soprano, cello, and piano; *Scene & Aria: Layover in CDG* (2009, arr. 2014) for soprano, cello and piano; *Wait* (2002) for piano with drone, and *A Collective Cleansing* (1999, rev. 2000) for solo voice and digital audio.

Bielawa also gives a Composition Workshop, free and open to the public, on Friday, March 1 at 11am, where she will sing original works by Adelphi student composers and offer feedback.

*Vireo: The Spiritual Biography of a Witch’s Accuser* is Bielawa’s made-for-TV and online opera, created in partnership with KCET’s *Artbound*. The eponymous heroine Vireo is a fourteen-year-old girl genius entangled in the historic obsession with female visionaries, as witch-hunters, early psychiatrists, and modern artists have defined them. *Vireo* was filmed at locations across the country – Alcatraz Island, a monastery on the Hudson River, an abandoned train station in Oakland, and the California Redwoods. Selections from *Vireo* will be performed on stage at Adelphi.

As Bielawa explains, “*Graffiti dell’amante* is an open-ended musical-dramatic exploration of the multi-faceted predicament of the Lover. Originally inspired by Roland Barthes’ playful yet poignant *A Lover’s Discourse: Fragments*, the piece uses various declarations of romantic Love from my own meandering reading to enact what Barthes calls the ‘Figures’ of the Lover. These 3-5 minute segments can be performed in any order, or in subsets to make performances of different lengths – always chosen by the audience assembled for that performance. In this way each audience hears its own collective romantic consciousness reflected back through the performance. The Lover declares him/herself to, from, and through so many faces!”

The text for *The Hour and the Poet* is taken from Goethe’s epic poem entitled *West-Eastern Divan*. This section was written when the poet was 70 years old and at the height of his “Orientalist” period, which brought forth many rich poems influenced by forms and topics from the East.

*Scene & Aria: Layover in CDG* was composed entirely in hotel rooms and on airplanes, and most memorably for Bielawa, during a layover in Charles DeGaulle airport in Paris. Bielawa says, “This airport is, I must admit, my least favorite in the world. While boasting some of the most inconvenient, non-ergonomic connections, CDG also seems to boast some of the shortest layover times. I decided to let swiftly changing, bustling musical moods provide a kind of imagined soundtrack to my layover.

There are narrative images in the score that only the players see – ‘passport control;’ ‘finding my gate number;’ ‘stopping for a cafe au lait;’ etc. The ‘Scene’ part of the piece is bustling and busy, while the wistful ‘Aria’ is accompanied by a single narrative notation: ‘memories of my trip.’”

*Wait* is the second of four related works (collectively *The Right Weather* – Roam, Wait, Beckon, and Start) based on six lines from Nabokov’s translation of Pushkin’s *Eugene Onegin*, which has passages of great intimacy and vulnerability, sections where the storyteller addresses the reader directly and hints at sorrows of his own, before going back to the story at hand.

*A Collective Cleansing* features selected choral excerpts from the Aeschylus tragedy *The Suppliant Maidens*. The tension between the digital sound technology and the unique natural instrument of the human voice provides grounds for exploration of the key issues in *A Collective Cleansing*; the exponential, seductive expansion of industry and technology, and its continued effects upon our sustaining environment.

#### **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. Her music has been described as “ruminative, pointillistic and harmonically slightly tart,” by *The New York Times*, and “fluid and arresting ... at once dramatic and probing,” by the *San Francisco Chronicle*. She is the recipient of the 2017 Music Award from the American Academy of Arts & Letters.

In 2019, Bielawa became the inaugural Composer-in-Residence and Chief Curator at the new Philip Glass Institute (PGI) at The New School, a landmark partnership with the Philip Glass Ensemble (PGE) and Bielawa, who has been the vocalist with the ensemble since 1992. Building on Glass’s enduring contributions to modern culture, the PGI will offer students, faculty, and the public the opportunity to immerse themselves in his compositions, other important artists within his circle, and the work of the iconic PGE.

Bielawa 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*, created with librettist Erik Ehn and director Charles Otte. *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. On February 28, 2019 Orange Mountain Music releases *Vireo* as a two CD + DVD box set, featuring all of the music and episodes.

Lisa Bielawa’s music is frequently performed throughout the US and abroad. Two of her works received their world premieres at the 2016 NY PHIL BIENNIAL: *My Outstretched Hand* by The Knights, San Francisco Girls Chorus, and Brooklyn Youth Chorus, which was recently given a second performance at The Kennedy Center; and *Vireo Caprice* by violinist Jennifer Koh at National Sawdust. The Seattle Chamber Music Society recently commissioned and premiered Bielawa’s *Fictional Migrations*, which *The Seattle Times* called, “sophisticated, propulsive, complex, and often beautiful.” In December 2016, the Orlando Philharmonic performed the world premiere of Bielawa’s *Drama/Self Pity* for orchestra and in January 2017, The Kennedy Center presented two of her works with Bielawa as soloist as part of their *KC Jukebox* series. Recent highlights also include Bielawa’s performance of *Sanctuary Songs* with Jennifer Koh at National Sawdust; *Start* for piano and chamber orchestra by pianist Andrew Armstrong and the Orchestra of the League of Composers; *50 Measures for Aaron* by SOLI Chamber Ensemble; *One Atom of Faith* by violinist Rebecca Fischer; and *The Trojan Women* by the String Orchestra of New York City.

Bielawa’s music can be found outside the concert hall as well, with two major works written for performance in public spaces. *Chance Encounter*, a piece comprising songs and arias constructed of speech overheard in transient public spaces, was premiered by soprano Susan Narucki and The Knights in Lower Manhattan's Seward Park. *Airfield Broadcasts* is a 60-minute work for hundreds of musicians, which 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.

Born in San Francisco into a musical family, Lisa Bielawa played the violin and piano, sang, and wrote music from early childhood. She moved to New York two weeks after receiving her B.A. in Literature in 1990 from Yale University, and became an active participant in New York musical life. She began touring as the vocalist with the Philip Glass Ensemble in 1992, and has also premiered and toured works by John Zorn, Anthony Braxton, and Michael Gordon. In 1997 she co-founded the MATA Festival, which celebrates the work of young composers. Bielawa served as Artistic Director of the acclaimed San Francisco Girls Chorus from 2013-2018 and recently completed her residency at Grand Central Art Center in Santa Ana, California. Her discography includes albums on the Tzadik, TROY, Innova, BMOP/sound, Orange Mountain Music and Sono Luminus labels. In 2016, Bielawa was awarded grants from New York Foundation for the Arts, the MAP Fund, and New Music USA. She was named a William Randolph Hearst Visiting Artist Fellow at the American Antiquarian Society for 2018.

For more information, please visit [www.lisabielawa.net](http://www.lisabielawa.net).

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