



Contact:
Public Relations
San Francisco Symphony
(415) 503-5474
publicrelations@sfsymphony.org
sfsymphony.org/press

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**SAN FRANCISCO SYMPHONY AND CHORUS & ESA-PEKKA SALONEN'S
DEUTSCHE GRAMMOPHON RECORDING OF KAIJA SAARIAHO: *ADRIANA
MATER* WINS 2026 GRAMOPHONE CLASSICAL MUSIC AWARD IN OPERA
RECORDING CATEGORY**

Kaija Saariaho: *Adriana Mater* features Esa-Pekka Salonen and vocal soloists Fleur Barron, Axelle Fanyo, Nicholas Phan, and Christopher Purves alongside the San Francisco Symphony and Chorus

To stream Kaija Saariaho: *Adriana Mater*, visit dgt.link/salonen-mater

SAN FRANCISCO, CA—Esa-Pekka Salonen and the San Francisco Symphony's Deutsche Grammophon-released live concert recording of *Adriana Mater*, conducted by Salonen, directed by Peter Sellars, and featuring the SF Symphony, SF Symphony Chorus, and vocal soloists Fleur Barron, Axelle Fanyo, Nicholas Phan, and Christopher Purves, won the award for Opera Recording today at the 2026

Gramophone Classical Music Awards. The award was announced during the 2026 *Gramophone* Awards ceremony at the De Vere Grand Connaught Rooms in London.

Kaija Saariaho: *Adriana Mater* was recorded live in concert in June 2023. This world premiere recording was released digitally by Deutsche Grammophon in August 2024, followed by a physical edition in April 2025. In 2025, Kaija Saariaho: *Adriana Mater* won the Grammy® Award for Best Opera Recording.

The recording captures a performance of a staged production of *Adriana Mater* conducted by Saariaho's lifelong friend Esa-Pekka Salonen and directed by Peter Sellars, delivered mere days after the composer's passing; mezzo-soprano Fleur Barron sings the title role, in a cast that also includes Axelle Fanyo (Refka), Nicholas Phan (Yonas), and Christopher Purves (Tsargo), alongside the San Francisco Symphony Chorus, directed by Jenny Wong. The composer's second opera—and second collaboration with Lebanese-born French writer Amin Maalouf—*Adriana Mater* is an intensely moving work exploring the relationship between a mother and her son in a war-torn country as they navigate the violence that defines their past and present, and threatens to claim their future. [Read more](#) about *Adriana Mater*.

Kaija Saariaho: *Adriana Mater* was produced, edited, and mixed by Jason O'Connell. Jon Johannsen and Jason O'Connell were recording engineers; Thomas Adams, Dunning Butler, Ryan Napoli, and Denise Woodward were assistant engineers; and Timo Kurkikangas was additional engineer and mixer. Mark Willsher was the mastering and mixing engineer.

Special thanks to Bernard & Barbro Osher for lead support, with additional support provided by Esa-Pekka Salonen and Jean-Baptiste Barrière.

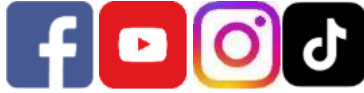
Esa-Pekka Salonen on Kaija Saariaho: *Adriana Mater* and the *Gramophone* Classical Music Award

"I would like to thank *Gramophone* Magazine for recognizing *Adriana Mater*. This recording is very important to me for a number of reasons, but one stands above them all: it was the last time I collaborated with my friend Kaija Saariaho before she passed away.

"Kaija and I met at the Sibelius Academy when we were very young. We truly grew up together, as people and as artists. In those early days, we considered ourselves to be rebels, trailblazing iconoclasts whose work was so transgressive that it might die in the halls of academia. In fact, I only started conducting to ensure that there would be somebody in the world who might one day conduct our works.

"As it turns out, we couldn't have been more wrong, at least where Kaija's work is concerned. And after all these years, I never cease to find joy and wonder in realizing her works. I am proud to have played whatever small role I have in bringing her art to the world—though doubtless it would have won over ears, hearts, and minds regardless. I truly believe her work will stand the test of time, and historians will look upon her as one of the most essential composers of the 21st century.

"But for now, this recording is a memento of my friend, whom I will forever miss. Fittingly, it was a family affair: Kaija's husband, Jean-Baptiste Barrière, helped with electronics in the performances, and their daughter, Aliisa Neige Barrière, was assistant conductor. That it has received so much recognition, and continues to do so tonight, says much more about Kaija's masterful composition than anything I may have brought to the piece."



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