

LARA DOWNES

A captivating presence both on and offstage, critically acclaimed American pianist Lara Downes has garnered wide acclaim as one of the most exciting and communicative pianists of today's generation. Lauded by NPR as "a delightful artist with a unique blend of musicianship and showmanship" and praised by the Washington Post for her stunning performances "rendered with drama and nuance," Lara presents the piano repertoire - from iconic favorites to newly commissioned works - in new ways that bridge musical tastes, genres and audiences.

Lara's fresh and insightful interpretations have captivated audiences at Carnegie Hall, Kennedy Center, Lincoln Center, Queen Elizabeth Hall London, the Vienna Konzerthaus, the Salle Gaveau Paris, the American Academy Rome, San Francisco Performances, the Portland International Piano Festival, Le Poisson Rouge NYC, the Montreal Chamber Music Festival, and the University of Washington World Series, among many others. Her performance projects have received support from prominent organizations such as the National Endowment for the Arts, the Barlow Endowment for Music Composition, and American Public Media.

Ms. Downes' chamber music appearances include collaborations with other noted soloists and ensembles, including violinists Rachel Barton Pine and Lara St. John, cellists Zuill Bailey and Denis Brott, the Miami and Alexander String Quartets, and the Brubeck Institute Jazz Quintet. Commissions and premieres of new works for Lara have come from composers Aaron Jay Kernis, David Sanford, Benny Golson, Eve Beglarian and Dan Coleman, among others.

Lara's previous solo recordings have met with tremendous critical and popular acclaim. Her debut CD, *Invitation to the Dance* (2000), was called "a magical recording" by NPR, and her second release, *American Ballads* (2001), was ranked by Amazon.com among the four best recordings of American concert music ever made. *Dream of Me* (2006), was praised for "exquisite sensitivity" by American Record Guide.

Lara's busy performance career is strongly driven by her commitment to expanding and developing new audiences for the arts. She is the Founder and President of the 88 KEYS® Foundation, a non-profit organization that fosters opportunities for music experiences and learning in America's public schools, and she regularly works and performs with the next generation of talented young musicians as Curator of the Young Artists program at the Mondavi Center for the Performing Arts at UC Davis, where she serves as Artist in Residence.

Lara Downes is a Steinway Artist.

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