

GUEST LECTURE

# “On Saariaho’s Microsonology”

**Judith Lochhead**  
**STONY BROOK UNIVERSITY**  
**Professor of Music History & Theory**  
**Thursday, March 29th, 6:00 p.m.**  
**Cook Recital Hall, Music Building**  
Free and open to the public.



**BIO**

Judy Lochhead is a music theorist and musicologist whose work focuses on the most recent musical practices in North America and Europe, with particular emphasis on music of the western classical tradition. Lochhead has articles appearing in such journals as *Music Theory Spectrum*, the *Journal of the American Musicological Society*, *Music Theory Online*, *Theory and Practice*, *In Theory Only*, *Perspectives of New Music*, and in various edited collections. Book-length publications include: *Reconceiving Structure: New Tools in Music Theory and Analysis* (Routledge, 2015); *Music’s Immanent Future: Beyond Past and Present*, co-edited with Sally Macarthur and Jennifer Shaw (Ashgate 2016); *Sound and Affect: Sound, Music, World*, edited by Stephen Decatur Smith, Judy Lochhead, and Eduardo Mendieta (Forthcoming, University of Chicago Press 2017); and *Postmodern Music/Postmodern Thought*, co-edited by Judy Lochhead and Joseph Auner (Routledge 2001). Many of Lochhead’s publications may be accessed at: [www.judylochhead.com](http://www.judylochhead.com)

**ABSTRACT:**

Kaija Saariaho’s compositional aesthetic developed in Paris during the early days of the spectral movement. Adopting a supple approach to spectral composition that sets her apart from her peers, Saariaho composes music that excavates sound, exploring their microscopic details. Saariaho’s compositional aesthetic—what I refer to as her microsonology—has evolved over the years, but it is motivated still by the micro-details of sounds and their temporal interactions and mutations. This paper demonstrates how Saariaho’s aesthetic of microsonology encompasses musical features of timbre, pitch, rhythm, and dynamics and how these features shape overall musical design. Parts of two works from the twenty-first century are considered: *Terrestre* (2002, for flute, percussion, violin, and cello) and *D’om le vrai sens* (2010, concerto for clarinet).

