

Karen LeFrak Short Biography: 720 Words
2023-2024

A native New Yorker, composer and author Karen LeFrak has created vibrant, moving musical scores that have been presented in prestigious concert halls across the globe. She has received several accolades for her children's books, published by Bloomsbury, Random House, and Crown Books.

Ms. LeFrak is an avid recording artist and has released ten studio recordings since March 2021 – the four-volume *Interlude, Days, Tomorrow, Continuum, Renewal, Awakening, and Months*. Her eleventh album, titled *Penumbra*, features ten short solo piano works that evokes the partial shadow of a penumbra – the hazy, enigmatic space between darkness and light. Additional albums this season are *Christmas Cookies* (chamber music) and additional peaceful piano recordings. Her music has been included in hundreds of curated playlists and has been streamed over 26 million times.

Ms. LeFrak's works have been commissioned and performed by a wide variety of prominent institutions and artists worldwide, including the New York Philharmonic; American Ballet Theatre; Mariinsky and San Francisco Ballets; Shanghai and Miami Symphony Orchestras; pianist Anne-Marie McDermott; and flutist Eugenia Zukerman; among many others. Her compositions have been heard at esteemed venues across the world, such as David Geffen Hall at Lincoln Center, Kennedy Center, Mariinsky Theatre, National Sawdust, Festival Napa Valley, and the White House.

Highlights of Ms. LeFrak's 2023-24 season include the premiere of "Bailamos" – the first movement of her *Miami Concerto* for guitar and orchestra – performed by the National Symphony Orchestra on the West Lawn of the U.S. Capitol, with the internationally acclaimed, GRAMMY-winning guitarist Sharon Isbin as soloist, led by conductor Enrico Lopez-Yañez. Later, the full concerto receives its world premiere by the Miami Symphony Orchestra. Additional highlights include performances of *Sleepover at the Museum* by the Singapore Symphony Orchestra with conductor Rodolfo Barráez, and by the Nashville Symphony with conductor Enrico Lopez-Yañez.

Highlights of previous seasons include *Sleepover at the Museum* in Washington D.C. with the National Symphony Orchestra and in Shanghai with the Shanghai Symphony Orchestra; a choreographed version of *Sleepover at the Museum* in Chicago by A & A Ballet and in Guatemala City at the Bravissimo International Festival; the world premieres of *Jake the Philharmonic Dog* and "Summer" piano concerto with the Miami Symphony Orchestra, led by Eduardo Marturet, *Gravity*, with the Johannesburg Philharmonic Orchestra and KwaZulu-Natal Philharmonic Orchestra; and chamber work performances by the American Composers Orchestra in New York, and by Gloriosa Piano Trio in Georgia and New York, among others.

Among Ms. LeFrak's more than 300 compositions, powerful orchestral works stand out, including a piano concerto, a guitar concerto, the multimedia children's scores *Sleepover at the*

Museum, orchestrated by Bill Ross, and *Jake the Philharmonic Dog*. Her ballet scores, including *Nothing Left*, *Pavlovsk*, *Gentle Memories*, and *Tous Les Jours*, have received wide acclaim. Her scores have been choreographed by Maxim Petrov, Jiří Bubeníček, Gemma Bond, Juliano Nunes, Alexei Kremnev and more. Yoonie Han, of the Gloriosa Trio, recorded Ms. LeFrak's solo piano work *Ombres d'été* for Steinway's Spirio, a highly-regarded player piano.

Ms. LeFrak has introduced children to the worlds of music, dance, and dogs in her four acclaimed children's books — *Jake the Philharmonic Dog*, *Jake the Ballet Dog*, *Best in Show*, and *Sleepover at the Museum*, which was named a 2020 International Literacy Association CBC Children's Choice Title. During the COVID-19 pandemic, the New York Philharmonic's performance of *Sleepover at the Museum* was included in its "NY Phil Plays On" digital content online, making it available to millions of children around the world. Ms. LeFrak has been invited to speak and read at museums and bookstores throughout the United States, including at the Natural History Museum of Los Angeles County and the New York Public Library.

Ms. LeFrak is a member of the President's Council of the Society of Memorial Sloan-Kettering and she previously served on the New York State Council on the Arts. She received her master's degree in musicology from Hunter College, winning the Dean's Award in Arts and Humanities for her thesis, *In Search of the New Classics*, which surveyed the commissioning activity of the New York Philharmonic from 1842 to 1986. She was elected to the Hunter College Hall of Fame in 2010 and was featured in *Good Housekeeping's* "10 Amazing Women In The Arts Over 50" in 2017. Ms. LeFrak studied composition privately with Robert DeGaetano, Jonathan Anderson, and Daniel Boico. She is married to Richard LeFrak and has two sons, five grandchildren, and two poodles.