

Karen Ouzounian Full-Length Bio (March 2024)

Described as “radiant” and “expressive” (*The New York Times*) and “nothing less than gorgeous” (*Memphis Commercial Appeal*), cellist Karen Ouzounian creates music from a deeply personal place. An acclaimed soloist, chamber musician, collaborator and composer, she is the recipient of the S&R Foundation’s Washington Award and sought after for her open-hearted, vibrantly detailed and fiercely committed performances. An omnivorous musical spirit, she has premiered numerous works and collaborated with some of the finest musicians of our time, including Rhiannon Giddens, Augustin Hadelich and Kayhan Kalhor.

At the heart of Karen’s artistic practice is her love of unusual collaborations and the development of adventurous new works. Her current and recent projects include the creation of an experimental theater work with acclaimed director Joanna Settle; the world premiere of Lembit Beecher’s cello concerto *Tell Me Again* with conductor Eric Jacobsen and the Orlando Philharmonic; the world premiere of Anna Clyne’s *Shorthand* for solo cello and strings with The Knights, which she toured as soloist with The Knights throughout Europe and the U.S. and released on Avie Records; the release of Kayhan Kalhor’s *Blue as the Turquoise Night of Neyshabur* for solo cello, kamancheh and tabla; the development, touring and recording of Osvaldo Golijov’s *Falling Out of Time*; the commissioning of a new piece for cello/voice, *Bring Your Own Garden Party*, by Christina Courtin; and the digital world premiere of Beecher’s *A Year to the Day*, filmed for The Violin Channel with Augustin Hadelich and Nicholas Phan. Additional recent and upcoming appearances include concertos with the Cabrillo Festival Orchestra, Milwaukee Symphony, Virginia Symphony, Sarasota Festival Orchestra, Greater Bridgeport Symphony, and Philharmonic Orchestra of Santiago, Chile, in repertoire ranging from the Elgar Cello Concerto to John Adams’s *Absolute Jest*. Her evening-length video work *In Motion*, an exploration of heritage, family history and migration through interviews, her own compositions, and collaborations with visual artists Kevork Mourad and Nomi Sasaki and composer-percussionist Haruka Fujii, was presented by *BroadBand*. Recent compositions include works for the Silkroad Ensemble, Noe Music, and an upcoming work for solo cello, Armenian instruments and choir for Cantori New York.

Dedicated to the art of chamber music, Karen was a founding member of the Aizuri Quartet for eleven years, during which time the ensemble was awarded major chamber music prizes on three continents, including Chamber Music America’s Cleveland Quartet Award, the Grand Prize at the M-Prize Chamber Arts Competition, the Osaka International Chamber Music Competition and the Wigmore Hall International String Quartet Competition, and served as the MetLiveArts String Quartet-in-Residence at the Metropolitan Museum of Art. The Quartet’s debut album, *Blueprinting*, featuring new works written for the Aizuri Quartet by five American composers, was released by New Amsterdam Records to critical acclaim (“In a word, stunning” - *I Care If You Listen*), nominated for a *GRAMMY* Award, and named one of NPR Music’s Best Classical Albums.

Karen performs around the globe as a member of the Silkroad Ensemble, the *GRAMMY* Award-winning group founded by cellist Yo-Yo Ma in 2000 that engages cross-cultural collaboration and understanding. Recent tours with the Silkroad Ensemble include *Uplifted Voices*, which included the world premiere of her composition *Der Zor* and appeared at Carnegie Hall, *American Railroad*, *Phoenix Rising*, and Kinan Azmeh and Kevork Mourad's *Home Within*. She has toured with *Musicians from Marlboro*, appeared at the Ravinia, Caramoor and Ojai festivals, performed as guest principal of the Saint Paul Chamber Orchestra, and is a member of the Brooklyn-based chamber collective The Knights.

Passionate about nurturing the next generation of artists, Karen has worked with cello, chamber music and composition students at USC, NYU, Oberlin, the Royal Conservatory of Music and Glenn Gould School in Toronto, the Hartt School, and the University of Nebraska-Lincoln; taught extensively at the collegiate and high school levels with the Silkroad Ensemble and Aizuri Quartet, and served as a mentor in The Juilliard School's Mentoring Program. Born to Armenian parents in Toronto, Karen holds Master of Music and Bachelor of Music degrees from Juilliard, where she was a student of Timothy Eddy, and a Post-Baccalaureate Diploma from The Curtis Institute of Music. She resides in New York City with her husband, composer and animator Lembit Beecher.

(706 words, current as of March 2024; for more information visit www.karenouzounian.com)

Karen Ouzounian Short Bio (March 2024)

Described as “radiant” and “expressive” (*The New York Times*) and “nothing less than gorgeous” (*Memphis Commercial Appeal*), cellist Karen Ouzounian creates music from a deeply personal place. An acclaimed soloist, chamber musician, collaborator and composer, she is the recipient of the S&R Foundation's Washington Award and sought after for her open-hearted, vibrantly detailed and fiercely committed performances. Recent projects include the creation of an experimental theater work with director Joanna Settle; the world premiere of Lembit Beecher's cello concerto *Tell Me Again* with the Orlando Philharmonic; the world premiere of Anna Clyne's *Shorthand* for solo cello and strings with The Knights, which she toured as soloist with The Knights throughout Europe and the U.S. and released on Avie Records; the release of Kayhan Kalhor's *Blue as the Turquoise Night of Neyshabur* for solo cello, kamancheh and tabla; the development, touring and recording of Osvaldo Golijov's *Falling Out of Time*; and the digital world premiere of Beecher's *A Year to the Day*, filmed for The Violin Channel with Augustin Hadelich and Nicholas Phan. Additional recent and upcoming appearances include concertos with the Cabrillo Festival Orchestra, Milwaukee Symphony, Virginia Symphony, Sarasota Festival Orchestra, Greater Bridgeport Symphony, and Philharmonic Orchestra of Santiago, Chile, in repertoire ranging from the Elgar Cello Concerto to John Adams's *Absolute Jest*.

Dedicated to the art of chamber music, she was a founding member of the Aizuri Quartet for eleven years, during which time the ensemble was awarded major chamber music prizes on three continents and earned a *GRAMMY* nomination. She has toured with *Musicians from Marlboro*, appeared at the Ravinia, Caramoor and Ojai festivals, and performs regularly as a member of the Silkroad Ensemble and The Knights. Her evening-length video work *In Motion*, an exploration of heritage, family history and migration through interviews, her own compositions, and collaborations with visual artists Kevork Mourad and Nomi Sasaki and composer-percussionist Haruka Fujii, was presented by *BroadBand*. Recent compositions include works for the Silkroad Ensemble, Noe Music, and an upcoming work for solo cello, Armenian instruments and choir for Cantori New York.

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