

ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT

# 23 for '23: Composers and performers to watch this year

This new class of artists is changing the sound of classical music



Perspective by [Michael Andor Brodeur](#)

Classical music critic

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You've heard it all before. Classical music is dead. It's one of our culture's most enduring variations on a theme: that classical music is dying, or aging, or rusty or, at the very least, dusty.

It's irritating but understandable — no art form seems more proud of its past, nor more reticent to show you its “new stuff.” On concert programs, living composers are often tucked in between the dead ones and expected to thrive. On classical radio, they seem to vanish into thin air. And on the national stage, rising classical talents struggle to be heard — no matter how big their voices.

If, like plenty of other people, you've ever strained to experience “classical music” as a form of contemporary art, this list may help. Included here (in no particular order) are 23 composers, performers and artists whose music directly engages and eagerly embraces the realities of the world around them. Their music addresses climate change and the natural world; the push and pull of identity; the pain, ecstasy, dizzying speed and quickening evolution of everyday life; the here and the now.

## 23 Bora Yoon



Bora Yoon. (Ryan Lash)

The sound artist, composer and performer (newly based in Portland, Ore., after 15 years in NYC) is now at work on “SPKR SPRKL” — a solo evening-length work “for wavefield synthesis, spatial audio, interactive projection design, gesture, and new music” that will premiere March 18 at the Experimental Media And Performing Arts Center (EMPAC) at Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute. Yoon, 42, is also working on a commission for modular experimental music group Ensemble Decipher. With librettist E.J. Koh, Yoon is developing an Asian opera titled “Handmaiden” based on the hit South Korean film by Park Chan-wook. On Feb. 4 at New York’s Kaufmann Concert Hall, she’ll join So Percussion for a premiere performance of “the wonder that’s keeping the stars apart.” [borayoon.com](http://borayoon.com).