

Lorelei Ensemble to perform at First Church Wenham and Nahant Town Hall

By Keith Powers / Correspondent

Posted Apr 4, 2018 at 10:54 PM

Updated Apr 4, 2018 at 10:54 PM

It will be part homecoming, and also part of a continuous adventure, when Lorelei Ensemble performs next week in Wenham and Nahant. The homecoming part for the all-female vocal ensemble will be for Lorelei's director Beth Willer, who served as choir director in Wenham's First Church "back when I was getting my master's," she says. "It was my first job."

If you go...

WHAT: Lorelei Ensemble

WHERE: First Church Wenham, 1 Arbor St. (April 10); Nahant Town Hall, 334 Nahant Road (April 14)

WHEN: Tuesday, April 10, 7 p.m.; Saturday, April 14, 8 p.m.

TICKETS: \$30. \$15 students. Visit www.loreleiensemble.com

It will be part homecoming, and also part of a continuous adventure, when Lorelei Ensemble performs next week in Wenham and Nahant.

The homecoming part for the all-female vocal ensemble will be for Lorelei's director Beth Willer, who served as choir director in Wenham's First Church "back when I was getting my master's," she says. "It was my first job."

The adventure part is really two-fold: Lorelei, based in Boston, has expanded its reach dramatically, touring extensively. Besides the group's travels, the adventure shows up in the repertory, which Lorelei has radically expanded in its 10-year existence with commissions, research and new arrangements.

The concerts will be Tuesday, April 10 at First Church Wenham, and Saturday, April 14 in Nahant Town Hall. The programs typify Lorelei's approach: a mix of new works (David Lang, Shawn Kirchner), ancient music (selections from the Turin Manuscript, Guillaume Du Fay), with an overall focus on American compositions.

"These are some of the best works that we've put into our repertoire," Willer says. "There are loose themes that tie them together, but for me I come back to impermanence, to the movement of people around the globe, and to the transient nature of human beings. I think this music is incredibly relevant to our times."

The repertory for women's voices is not robust; Lorelei has responded by rearranging older settings, but also aggressively commissioning new works. "I think we have had something like 48 or 50 premieres," Willer says. "Every concert we have at least one, and sometimes four or five."

The commissions have led to multiple collaborations as well. Lorelei has had many high-profile appearances, including several with the Boston Symphony Orchestra. Last year they sang George Benjamin's "Dream of the Song" multiple times with the BSO — at Tanglewood, in Symphony Hall, and at Carnegie Hall — and next season they will sing Puccini's "Suor Angelica" with the orchestra. Lorelei has also collaborated with the Boston Modern Orchestra Project, Odyssey Opera, and A Far Cry in memorable recent programs.

These two concerts include "Mother of Exiles," by Wenham resident Mary Montgomery Koppel. "She was Lorelei's original composer-in-residence," Willer says, "She's written around 10 pieces for us. This piece is very brief, but touching. She's taken words from Emma Lazarus's poem on the Statue of Liberty — 'Give us your tired' — and created a striking work."

It's just part of an overall focus on the American experience, both socially and musically, for the group. "The second half of this program is a particularly American set," Willer says, referring not only to Koppel's work, but pieces by Kirchner, Lang, and Adam Jacob Simon.

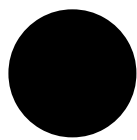
“I feel strongly that American music is bold and raw. Searching for a broader identity. There is something beautiful about the flexibility of these tunes. They are new, but they feel familiar, and the most permanent.”

“Our audience is remarkably young, and diverse,” she says. “Everyone that comes to hear Lorelei is moved in unique ways, but an important part of that is the impact of the American repertoire.”

“The music suits us. In particular David Lang’s minimalism — that’s one part of the sound we make. You will hear this very broad range of vocal color and style, things you may not hear on your average concert.”

Lorelei Ensemble sings music of David Lang, Guillaume Du Fay, Scott Ordway, Mary Montgomery Koppel, Shawn Kirchner and others on Tuesday, April 10 at First Church Wenham and Saturday, April 14 at Nahant Town Hall. For tickets and information visit www.loreleiensemble.com.

Keith Powers covers music and the arts for GateHouse Media and WBUR’s ARTery. Follow [@PowersKeith](https://twitter.com/PowersKeith); email to keithmichaelpowers@gmail.com



SIGN UP FOR DAILY E-MAIL

Wake up to the day’s top news, delivered to your inbox

Lorelei Ensemble to perform at First Church Wenham and Nahant Town Hall

By Keith Powers / Correspondent

Posted Apr 4, 2018 at 10:54 PM

Updated Apr 4, 2018 at 10:54 PM

It will be part homecoming, and also part of a continuous adventure, when Lorelei Ensemble performs next week in Wenham and Nahant. The homecoming part for the all-female vocal ensemble will be for Lorelei’s director Beth Willer, who served as choir director in Wenham’s First Church “back when I was getting my master’s,” she says. “It was my first job.”

If you go...

WHAT: Lorelei Ensemble

WHERE: First Church Wenham, 1 Arbor St. (April 10); Nahant Town Hall, 334 Nahant Road (April 14)

WHEN: Tuesday, April 10, 7 p.m.; Saturday, April 14, 8 p.m.

TICKETS: \$30. \$15 students. Visit www.loreleiensemble.com

It will be part homecoming, and also part of a continuous adventure, when Lorelei Ensemble performs next week in Wenham and Nahant.

The homecoming part for the all-female vocal ensemble will be for Lorelei's director Beth Willer, who served as choir director in Wenham's First Church "back when I was getting my master's," she says. "It was my first job."

The adventure part is really two-fold: Lorelei, based in Boston, has expanded its reach dramatically, touring extensively. Besides the group's travels, the adventure shows up in the repertory, which Lorelei has radically expanded in its 10-year existence with commissions, research and new arrangements.

The concerts will be Tuesday, April 10 at First Church Wenham, and Saturday, April 14 in Nahant Town Hall. The programs typify Lorelei's approach: a mix of new works (David Lang, Shawn Kirchner), ancient music (selections from the Turin Manuscript, Guillaume Du Fay), with an overall focus on American compositions.

"These are some of the best works that we've put into our repertoire," Willer says. "There are loose themes that tie them together, but for me I come back to impermanence, to the movement of people around the globe, and to the transient nature of human beings. I think this music is incredibly relevant to our times."

The repertory for women's voices is not robust; Lorelei has responded by rearranging older settings, but also aggressively commissioning new works. "I think we have had something like 48 or 50 premieres," Willer says. "Every concert we have at least one, and sometimes four or five."

The commissions have led to multiple collaborations as well. Lorelei has had many high-profile appearances, including several with the Boston Symphony Orchestra. Last year they sang George Benjamin's "Dream of the Song" multiple times with the BSO — at Tanglewood, in Symphony Hall, and at Carnegie Hall — and next season they will sing Puccini's "Suor Angelica" with the orchestra. Lorelei has also collaborated with the Boston Modern Orchestra Project, Odyssey Opera, and A Far Cry in memorable recent programs.

These two concerts include "Mother of Exiles," by Wenham resident Mary Montgomery Koppel. "She was Lorelei's original composer-in-residence," Willer says, "She's written around 10 pieces for us. This piece is very brief, but touching. She's taken words from Emma Lazarus's poem on the Statue of Liberty — 'Give us your tired' — and created a striking work."

It's just part of an overall focus on the American experience, both socially and musically, for the group. "The second half of this program is a particularly American set," Willer says, referring not only to Koppel's work, but pieces by Kirchner, Lang, and Adam Jacob Simon.

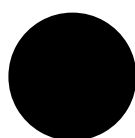
"I feel strongly that American music is bold and raw. Searching for a broader identity. There is something beautiful about the flexibility of these tunes. They are new, but they feel familiar, and the most permanent.

"Our audience is remarkably young, and diverse," she says. "Everyone that comes to hear Lorelei is moved in unique ways, but an important part of that is the impact of the American repertoire.

"The music suits us. In particular David Lang's minimalism — that's one part of the sound we make. You will hear this very broad range of vocal color and style, things you may not hear on your average concert."

Lorelei Ensemble sings music of David Lang, Guillaume Du Fay, Scott Ordway, Mary Montgomery Koppel, Shawn Kirchner and others on Tuesday, April 10 at First Church Wenham and Saturday, April 14 at Nahant Town Hall. For tickets and information visit www.loreleiensemble.com.

Keith Powers covers music and the arts for GateHouse Media and WBUR's ARTery. Follow [@PowersKeith](https://twitter.com/PowersKeith); email to keithmichaelpowers@gmail.com



SIGN UP FOR DAILY E-MAIL

Wake up to the day's top news, delivered to your inbox
