

## Lorelei Ensemble Premieres Julia Wolfe's *Her Story*

Performances by the Nashville Symphony, Boston Symphony Orchestra,  
San Francisco Symphony, Chicago Symphony Orchestra & National Symphony Orchestra

New Work Commemorates History of Women's Fight for  
Equality in America and the Ongoing Struggle for Equal Rights

*Her Story* Premieres in Fall 2022



“impeccable musicality” – *The Boston Globe*

[www.LoreleiEnsemble.com](http://www.LoreleiEnsemble.com)

New York, NY (July 13, 2022) – Nationally acclaimed Boston-based vocal ensemble **Lorelei Ensemble** announces the 2022-2023 premiere performances of composer **Julia Wolfe's *Her Story***, a 30-minute piece for orchestra and women's vocal ensemble, co-commissioned and co-presented by the **Nashville Symphony** led by **Giancarlo Guerrero** (Thursday, September 15, 2022 at 7:00pm; Friday, September 16, 2022 at 8:00pm; and Saturday, September 17, 2022 at 8:00pm), the **Chicago Symphony Orchestra** led by conductor **Marin Alsop** (Friday, January 6, 2023 at 8:00pm and Saturday, January 7, 2023 at 8:00pm), the **Boston Symphony Orchestra** led by conductor **Giancarlo Guerrero** (Thursday, March 16, 2023 at 7:30pm; Friday, March 17, 2023 at 1:30pm; and Saturday, March 18, 2023 at 8:00pm), and the **San Francisco Symphony** led by conductor **Giancarlo Guerrero** (Thursday, May 25, 2023 at 7:30pm and Saturday, May 27, 2023 at 7:30pm). A performance with the National Symphony Orchestra will be announced at a later date.

Written for Lorelei Ensemble and orchestra, *Her Story* invokes the words of historical figures and the spirit of pivotal moments to pay tribute to the centuries of ongoing struggle for equal rights for women in America. The 30-minute piece for orchestra and women's vocal ensemble incorporates text from throughout the history of women's fight for equality, ranging from a letter written by Abigail Adams, to words attributed to Sojourner Truth, to public attacks directed at women protesting for the right to vote, to political satire, and is the latest in a series of Wolfe's compositions highlighting monumental and turbulent moments in American history and culture, and the people—both real and imagined, celebrated and forgotten—that defined them. The world premiere performances with the Nashville Symphony will be recorded for a forthcoming album release.

NPR describes **Julia Wolfe** as "our labor documentarian, tackling historic issues that resonate today... By marrying history and music, Wolfe forces us to look to our past to protect our future." The immersive, visual performances will be directed by **Anne Kauffman** with scenic and lighting design by **Jeff Sugg**, costumes by **Marion Talan**, and produced by **Bang on a Can**.

"Women have been battling for equality from the beginning of the nation," writes Wolfe. "*Her Story* captures the passion and perseverance of women refusing subordination, demanding representation, and challenging the prejudice and power structures that have limited women's voices. The dynamic vocal artists of Lorelei Ensemble team up with five major American orchestras to tell this important yet much neglected thread of American political history."

Previous works by Wolfe include *Steel Hammer*, a retelling of the John Henry ballad that deconstructs and rebuilds the story of the story; the Pulitzer Prize-winning *Anthracite Fields*, an immersive oratorio exploring the American coal industry at its height, and the human cost; and *Fire in my mouth*, which focuses on the passionate activism of young immigrant women in New York's garment industry in the early 20th Century, centered on the Triangle Shirtwaist Factory fire.

The impetus of the piece stemmed from Lorelei Ensemble Artistic Director **Beth Willer's** longstanding admiration of Wolfe's work. She highlights the composition's importance in this particular moment in our history, stating, "I have been absolutely captivated by the work of Julia Wolfe since conducting her Pulitzer-prize winning work, *Anthracite Fields*, in 2017. Her ability to uncover and curate the diverse voices surrounding both common and spectacular events in the rich and complicated history of our nation makes her an ideal creator and collaborator for this project. We envisioned this piece as a celebration of the power and influence of American women in achieving equality and justice for all American citizens, marking the anniversary of the first women's vote and elevating the ongoing and important work of strengthening democracy. It is an incredible opportunity to work with Julia on a project that is sure to make a lasting impact, both artistically and culturally."

*Her Story* was co-commissioned by the Boston Symphony Orchestra, the Chicago Symphony Orchestra, the Nashville Symphony, the National Symphony, and the San Francisco Symphony and with the generous support of Linda and Stuart Nelson.

### **Performance Details**

#### **Nashville Symphony**

#### **Lorelei Ensemble**

**Giancarlo Guerrero, conductor**

**Thursday, September 15, 2022 at 7:00pm**

**Friday, September 16, 2022 at 8:00pm**

**Saturday, September 17, 2022 at 8:00pm**

**Schermerhorn Symphony Center | 1 Symphony Place | Nashville, TN**

**Tickets:** Single tickets go on sale July 22, 2022

**Ticket Link:**

<https://www.nashvillesymphony.org/tickets/concert/2022-2023-season/classical-1-trailblazing-women/>

**Program:**

Joan Tower – *1920/2019*

Florence Price – Piano Concerto in One Movement

**Karen Walwyn**, piano

Julia Wolfe – *Her Story* [**World Premiere, Nashville Symphony Co-Commission**]

**Chicago Symphony Orchestra**

**Lorelei Ensemble**

**Marin Alsop**, conductor

**Friday, January 6, 2023 at 8:00pm**

**Saturday, January 7, 2023 at 8:00pm**

**Symphony Center | 220 S Michigan Ave | Chicago, IL**

**Tickets:** Subscriptions are currently on sale

**Ticket Link:** <https://cso.org/performances/22-23/cso-classical/alsop-conducts-wolfe-her-story/>

**Program:**

Clyne - *This Midnight Hour*

Montgomery - *Rounds*

**Awadagin Pratt**, piano

Julia Wolfe – *Her Story* [**Midwest Premiere, CSO Co-Commission**]

**Boston Symphony Orchestra**

**Lorelei Ensemble**

**Giancarlo Guerrero**, conductor

**Thursday, March 16, 2023 at 7:30pm**

**Friday, March 17, 2023 at 1:30pm**

**Saturday, March 18, 2023 at 8:00pm**

**Symphony Hall | 301 Massachusetts Ave. | Boston, MA**

**Tickets:** Single tickets go on sale August 8, 2022 at 10:00am EDT

**Ticket link:** <https://www.bso.org/events/gorecki-wolfe>

**Program:**

Henryk Górecki - *Symphony No. 3, Symphony of Sorrowful Songs*

Julia Wolfe – *Her Story* [**Northeast Premiere, CSO Co-Commission**]

**San Francisco Symphony**

**Lorelei Ensemble**

**Giancarlo Guerrero**, conductor

**Thursday, May 25, 2023 at 7:30pm**

**Saturday, May 27, 2023 at 7:30pm**

**Davies Symphony Hall | 201 Van Ness Ave. | San Francisco, CA**

**Tickets:** Single tickets go on sale Saturday, July 16, 2022 at 12:00pm PT.

**Ticket Link:** <https://www.sfsymphony.org/Buy-Tickets/2022-23/Her-Story>

**Program:**

Nicolai Rimsky-Korsakov - Scheherazade  
Julia Wolfe – *Her Story* [West Coast Premiere, SFO Co-Commission]

**National Symphony Orchestra**  
**Future date to be announced**

### **About Lorelei Ensemble**

Heralded for its “full-bodied and radiant sound” (*The New York Times*) and “stunning precision of harmony, intonation, and... spectacular virtuosity” (*Gramophone Magazine*), **Lorelei Ensemble** is recognized across the globe for its bold and inventive programs that champion the extraordinary flexibility and virtuosity of the human voice. Led by founder and artistic director Beth Willer, Lorelei has established an inspiring mission, curating culturally-relevant and artistically audacious programs that stretch and challenge the expectations of artists and audiences alike. Recognized for its rich and diverse vocal palette, the ensemble is celebrated for its compelling delivery of Willer's “exact, smooth, and stylish” programming (*The Boston Globe*).

Lorelei Ensemble is creating a living repertoire for a living audience, working with today's leading composers to commission more than 60 new works that expand and deepen the repertoire of sounds, timbres, words and stories that women use to reflect and challenge our world. This new repertoire for women's and treble voices demands fierce flexibility and openness from each artist and listener, allowing unparalleled music making that is born from the unique position of power and cultural influence that women hold. Collaborating composers include David Lang, Julia Wolfe, George Benjamin, Kati Agócs, Lisa Bielawa, Kareem Roustom, Jessica Meyer, Christopher Cerrone, Sungji Hong, Reiko Yamada, Peter Gilbert, Scott Ordway, James Kallembach, John Supko, and many more. Current projects and commissions include Julia Wolfe's *Her Story*, celebrating the Ratification of the 19th Amendment and the First Vote for American Women; Christopher Cerrone's *Beaufort Scales*, a cautionary tale in the era of climate change; and Ayanna Woods' *Look Up*, inspired by the themes and imagery in NK Jemisin's *Cloud Dragon Skies*.

Recordings document and preserve the work of Lorelei and its collaborators for future artists and audiences. On the New Focus, Sono Luminus, Cantaloupe, and BMOP Sound labels, Lorelei has recorded the music of living composers Kati Agócs, Peter Gilbert, James Kallembach, David Lang, Jessica Meyer, and Scott Ordway, as well as historical repertoires from William Billings, Guillaume Du Fay, Alfred Schnittke, Tōru Takemitsu, the Turin Codex and the Codex Calixtinus. Recent releases include David Lang's *love fail* (Cantaloupe 2020), described as “a work that channels poignancy through harmonic and melodic clarity” (*The Road to Sound*) and *Impermanence* (Sono Luminus 2018), about which WQXR raved, “Utterly gorgeous...The group's...probing interpretations of works both ancient and modern makes for instantly affecting listening.” In 2022, Lorelei Ensemble will release a recording of James Kallembach's *Antigone: The Writings of Sophie Scholl* on New Focus Recordings.

Lorelei Ensemble maintains a robust national touring schedule, including recent collaborations with the Boston Symphony Orchestra, Boston Modern Orchestra Project, Tanglewood Music Center Orchestra, A Far Cry, and Cantus, and performances at celebrated venues across the country, including Carnegie Hall, the Metropolitan Museum of Art, Tanglewood Music Center, Boston's Symphony Hall, Trinity Church Wall Street, the Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum, and the Ordway Center for the Performing Arts. Performances in future seasons are planned with the Chicago Symphony Orchestra, San Francisco Symphony, National Symphony Orchestra, and Nashville Symphony Orchestra.

Committed to education, Lorelei is empowering young artists to be our next creative leaders through its work with rising performers and composers at children's choirs, high schools, and colleges and universities across the country. Cultivating both individual and collaborative artistry, Lorelei helps young artists hone their skills to

become flexible, perceptive, and open-minded musicians. Past residencies include work with ensembles and composers at Harvard University, Yale University, Duke University, Bucknell University, University of Iowa, Cornell University, Luther College, Vassar College, Macalester College, Mount Holyoke College, Connecticut College, Hillsdale College, Keene State College, Gordon College, the Pennsylvania Girlchoir, and the Connecticut Children's Chorus.

Founded in Boston in 2007, Lorelei Ensemble's artists are based across the United States and maintain active performing and teaching schedules. Learn more at [www.loreleiensemble.com](http://www.loreleiensemble.com).

### **About Julia Wolfe**

**Julia Wolfe** draws inspiration from folk, classical, and rock genres, bringing a modern sensibility to each while simultaneously tearing down the walls between them.

The 2019 world premiere of *Fire in my mouth*, a large-scale work for orchestra and women's chorus, by the New York Philharmonic with The Crossing and the Young People's Chorus of New York City, received extensive acclaim — one reviewer called the work "a monumental achievement in high musical drama, among the most commandingly imaginative and emotively potent works of any kind that I've ever experienced." (*The Nation*) The premiere recording of *Fire in my mouth* is released on Decca Gold, and was recorded live during the world premiere. The work is the third in a series of compositions about the American worker: 2009's *Steel Hammer*, which examines the folk-hero John Henry, and the 2014 Pulitzer Prize-winning *Anthracite Fields*, a concert-length oratorio for chorus and instruments, which draws on oral histories, interviews, speeches, and more to honor the people who persevered and endured in the Pennsylvania Anthracite coal region. Mark Swed of the *LA Times* wrote *Anthracite Fields* "captures not only the sadness of hard lives lost...but also of the sweetness and passion of a way of daily life now also lost. The music compels without overstatement. This is a major, profound work."

Wolfe's music is distinguished by an intense physicality and a relentless power that pushes performers to extremes and demands attention from the audience. She has written a major body of work for strings, from quartets to full orchestra. Her music has been heard at venues throughout the world and has been recorded on Cantaloupe Music, Teldec, Point/Universal, Sony Classical, and Argo/Decca.

In addition to receiving the Pulitzer Prize, Wolfe was a 2016 MacArthur Fellow, she received the 2015 Herb Alpert Award in Music, and was named Musical America's 2019 Composer of the Year. She is on faculty at the NYU Steinhardt School and is co-founder/co-artistic director of New York's legendary music collective Bang on a Can. Her music is published by Red Poppy, Ltd. (ASCAP) and is distributed worldwide by Ricordi/Universal Music Classical. Learn more at [www.juliawolfemusic.com](http://www.juliawolfemusic.com).

*\*Photo of Lorelei Ensemble at the top of release by Allana Taranto, Ars Magna Studio. Photo of Julia Wolfe by Peter Serling.*

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