

COUTROOM CONCERT SERIES

Happy Birthday, Libby Larsen!

January 7th, 2021 • 12 PM

Libby Larsen (b. 24 December 1950, Wilmington, Delaware) is one of America's most prolific and most performed living composers. She has created a catalogue of over 500 works spanning virtually every genre from intimate vocal and chamber music to massive orchestral works and over twelve operas. Her music has been praised for its dynamic, deeply inspired, and vigorous contemporary American spirit. Constantly sought after for commissions and premieres by major artists, ensembles and orchestras around the world, Libby Larsen has established a permanent place for her works in the concert repertory.

Larsen has been hailed as "the only English-speaking composer since Benjamin Britten who matches great verse with fine music so intelligently and expressively" (USA Today); as "a composer who has made the art of symphonic writing very much her own." (Gramophone); as "a mistress of orchestration" (Times Union); and for "assembling one of the most impressive bodies of music of our time" (Hartford Courant). Her music has been praised for its "clear textures, easily absorbed rhythms and appealing melodic contours that make singing seem the most natural expression imaginable." (Philadelphia Inquirer) "Libby Larsen has come up with a way to make contemporary opera both musically current and accessible to the average audience." (The Wall Street Journal). "Her ability to write memorable new music completely within the confines of traditional harmonic language is most impressive." (Fanfare)

Libby Larsen has received numerous awards and accolades, including a 1993 Grammy as producer of the CD: The Art of Arlene Augér, an acclaimed recording that features Larsen's Sonnets from the Portuguese. Her opera *Frankenstein, The Modern Prometheus* was selected as one of the eight best classical music events of 1990 by USA Today. The first woman to serve as a resident composer with a major orchestra, she has held residencies with the California Institute of the Arts, the Arnold Schoenberg Institute, the Philadelphia School of the Arts, the Cincinnati Conservatory, the Minnesota Orchestra, the Charlotte Symphony, and the Colorado Symphony. Larsen's many commissions and recordings are a testament to her fruitful collaborations with a long list of world-renowned artists, including The King's Singers, Benita Valente, and Frederica von Stade, among others. Her works are widely recorded on such labels as Angel/EMI, Nonesuch, Decca, and Koch International.

As a past holder of the 2003-2004 Harissios Papamarkou Chair in Education at the Library of Congress and a recipient of the Eugene McDermott Award in the Arts from the Massachusetts

Institute of Technology, a Lifetime Achievement Award from the American Academy of Arts and Letters, a Peabody award, Libby Larsen is a vigorous, articulate champion of the music and musicians of our time, and the Frederick Lowe Medal for American Music from the Frederick Lowe Symposium in 2015. In 1973, she co-founded (with Stephen Paulus) the Minnesota Composers Forum, now the American Composers Forum, which has been an invaluable advocate for composers in a difficult, transitional time for American arts. Consistently sought-after as a leader in the generation of millennium thinkers, Libby Larsen's music and ideas have refreshed the concert music tradition and the composer's role in it.

PROGRAM

Gavel PatterSonja Thompson & Mary Jo Gothmann, *piano duo***Home**

VocalEssence Ensemble Singers

Raspberry Island DreamingClara Osowski, *mezzo soprano*;
Tyler Wottrich, *piano***Sonata in one movement (on 'Kalenda Maya')**Philip Brunelle, *organ***The Peculiar Case of HH Holmes**Forestan Recital Project:
Aaron Engebret, *baritone*
Alison d'Amato, *piano***Four on the Floor**

Minneapolis Artists Ensemble

Wolf Song in Los AngelesClara Osowski, *mezzo soprano*
David Hagedorn, *vibes*
Gordy Johnson, *bass*

Gavel PatterSonja Thompson & Mary Jo Gothmann, *piano duo***Home**

If Blame be my side—forfeit Me—
But doom me not to forfeit Thee—
To forfeit Thee? The very name
Is sentence from Belief—and Home—
—Emily Dickinson, #775

Raspberry Island Dreaming

I. The River is . . .

By Joyce Sutphen

The river is the sky, rowing itself
across the land in a long lazy boat.
Or the river is a herd of horses
under the rolling silk that slip to shore.

The river is an old song, telling all
its troubles in water over waterfalls.
It has a steady heart, the river does,
and sounds its current through the dusty land

The river is all dreams we ever dreamed:
Slow-sweet memory, swift-rushing terror,
taking us, washing us, carrying us
along its way, which is always the same,
always moving away from what we found,
never coming in the same way again.

II. Where the River Bends

by Joyce Sutphen

One Sunday we went down to the river,
all of us in our forty-nine Chevy,
until we reached the gate and my father
said, "Come on, I'll lead the rest of the way."

There were horses in the fields where we walked,
there were hawks circling where the river bent,
we were blue-jeaned pilgrims who only talked
of northern pike, of carp and of pheasants.

I put my feet down where that river ran,
and sat on a stone that nothing could move,
and watched that gray ribbon slip through the land
light as the wind, like a hand in a glove.

Years late, when it was time to go home
we walked single file, filled up to the brim.

III. Raspberry Island

by Patricia Hampl

My father loved the spring floods. "Don't drive down to the river," my mother would say when my father and I piled into the Ford. "H-m-m," he replied. "H-m-m." He drove slowly, pausing and pointing and not saying much. Ducks, he would say, watercress, mushroom caves, Raspberry Island.

We sat there, not speaking for a while in the pleasant late afternoon...two slender boats skimming along the river. "This used to be the place where people gathered—picnics, swimming, music" (my father said). And why not? Why not gather at the river?...All of us (should come). We'll hear music...Here at the river, the beautiful, beautiful river.

Sonata in one movement (on 'Kalenda Maya')

Philip Brunelle, *organ*

The Peculiar Case of HH Holmes

I. I State My Case

A room , unused since I used to reside there.
In it a stove that still bears the traces of fire.

- a little spinning top and a tin man
- a topcoat
- a trunk with a strip of blue calico mending a seam
- a woman's shoe
- an ink bottle
- a handful of pearl dress buttons

A gentleman – I am - the kind you want for a companion
A civic-minded man – the kind you want in your circle
A business man – the kind you want for your partner

- Doctor
- Pharmacist
- Land development
- Glass bending
- Gas refinery
- Hotelier

HUMANUS INTELLIGENCIUS ARACHNOIDUS

My business – profit

My resources- people

ANIMA, ANIMUS, ANIMATO

- My products
- a little spinning top and a tin man
- a topcoat
- a trunk with a strip of blue calico mending a seam
- a woman's shoe
- an ink bottle
- a handful of pearl dress buttons
..... bones

Four on the Floor

Minneapolis Artists Ensemble

Wolf Song in Los Angeles

by Bill Holm



**Schubert
Club**



VOCALESSENCE
TOGETHER WE SING

**source
song
festival**