

Karen Siegel

Long Biography – March 2024

Composer Karen Siegel creates innovative, engaging, and meaningful choral and vocal works. Hailed as “complex and wonderful,” (TheatreScene.net) and “colorful and at times groovy” (WQXR.org), her works are frequently performed by the New York City-based ensemble C4: the Choral Composer/Conductor Collective, which she co-founded in 2005.

Recent commissions include “Despertar,” a collaboration with the poet Carlos Pintado commissioned by Consonare Choral Community, Peninsula Women's Chorus, the West Village Chorale, and the Yale Glee Club; the choral sound installation “Lessons of Stone,” for the Astoria Choir at the Noguchi Gallery in Long Island City; and the feminist collaborative work “Vision of Flight,” for the Danish National Girls' Choir and cellist Henrik Dam Thomsen.

During the isolation phase of the COVID-19 pandemic, Karen innovated and developed ways to foster live remote choral singing, composing commissions for the medium and leading workshops in online singing. That initiative included “Here I Am,” composed by Karen as a gift to the choral community and premiered by C4 in the first livestream remote choral concert of the social distancing age; as well as the live remote choral project “Reunion,” which brought together Joyful Noise, Cambridge Common Voices, the Central Illinois Youth Chorus, and cellist Martin Laufhutte across six states.

The Hat: Arendt Meets Heidegger, Karen's one-act opera, premiered at the Pride Arts Center in Chicago with Thompson Street Opera in 2019. With a libretto by Zsuzsanna Ardó, *The Hat* imagines the igniting of intellectual and sexual sparks between these historical figures, despite their disparate backgrounds.

Karen's works are featured on albums by The Crossing (coming Fall 2024), Harmonium Choral Society, the Choir of Trinity College Melbourne, Tonality, and C4; are published by See-A-Dot Music Publishing and Chestnutoak Press; are distributed under the Creative Commons license in the Justice Choir Songbook, and are published in *The Singing Book, Fourth Edition* (Rowan & Littlefield, coming June 2024). Her compositions have won the 2018 Yale Glee Club Emerging Composers Competition and the Esoterics' 2014-2015 POLYPHONOS Choral Composition Competition (National Composer category), Khorikos ensemble's 2015 ORTUS competition, the New York Virtuoso Singers 2013 Choral Composition Competition, the 2009 Starer Award for Composition at the City University of New York Graduate Center, and the Manhattan Choral Ensemble's 2008 Commissioning Competition, as well as awards from Boston Metro Opera and NYU.

Karen is also an accomplished choral conductor. She has conducted a wide variety of contemporary repertoire during her nineteen years as one of the conductors of C4. Karen also founded and directed the Beloved Community Charter School High School Chorus in Jersey City in the spring of 2023.

Karen received a PhD in composition from the CUNY Graduate Center, where she studied with Tania León; and she holds degrees from Yale (BA in psychology) and NYU Steinhardt (MM in composition), where she studied with Marc-Antonio Consoli. She has been on the faculty at Drew University and the City College of New York. Karen lives in Hoboken, New Jersey with her husband and two sons. <http://karensiegel.com/>