

*"A blend of wiry strength and ethereal charm that set her apart from the female vocalists crowding the jazz scene...Without compromising her debt to the most stringent jazz grammar, her light-against-dark phrasing revealed a love of pop and soul that gave fresh, heartfelt meaning....." Lloyd Sachs, Chicago Sun Times*

**Lenora Zenzalai Helm** is a jazz vocalist, vocal musicianship coach, composer, lyricist and educator with six solo recordings, her own recording and publishing company, Zenzalai Music, and an extensive discography with some of the biggest names in jazz and contemporary music. A recipient of the Sister Cities 2016 Mayor's Award for Promoting International Understanding, 2015 North Carolina Central University Teaching Excellence Award (the highest university award for faculty), a quarter-finalist for the 2015 GRAMMY Music Educator of the Year Award, Salzburg Global Citizenship Fellow, UNC Global Educator Fellow, a Fulbright Senior Specialist, and former U.S. Jazz Ambassador under the auspices of the State Department and Kennedy Center, her achievements garnered accolades as "...the voice of her generation," by Jazziz Magazine. She has appeared in renowned jazz festivals and venues worldwide, including Jazz at Lincoln Center, Schomburg Center's Women in Jazz Festival, JVC Jazz Festivals, Clifford Brown Jazz Festival, Capetown Jazz Festival, South Africa and Fiji Jazz & Blues Festival. Brief career highlights include jazz composer awards from Chamber Music America/Doris Duke's New Jazz Works and the MacDowell Colony composer fellowship, and adding lyrics (with the composers' approval) to the compositions of Andrew Hill, Wayne Shorter and Branford Marsalis. She appears on recordings with Andrew Hill, Stanley Cowell, Donald Brown, Dave Liebman, Ron Carter, Antonio Hart, and has toured with Michael Franks and Freddie Jackson. Her 2009 critically acclaimed *Chronicles of a Butterfly* CD release, produced by Branford Marsalis, was recorded live at Hayti Heritage Center, and featured pianist Mulgrew Miller. Her latest CD, *I Love Myself When I'm Laughing* was listed on Independent Ear's [30 Recommended 2012 Record Releases](#) amongst an esteemed list of jazz artists. This recording also joined the distinction with her previous releases (in 2003 and 2004) garnering inclusion on the 2013 GRAMMY ballot for consideration of nomination in vocal jazz and arranging categories. As a TV and film music composer, most recent music credits include writing the musical score for the children's play, *Indigo Blue: A Reimagining of the Pied Piper* for Walltown Children's Theater, Durham, NC. Other notable composition credits include Ms. Helm's compositions featured in several Black History Month promo campaigns on the ESPN network.

Lenora is a fierce arts education advocate and created a library of online vocal training programs at [www.LenoraHelm.online](http://www.LenoraHelm.online). A virtual boot camp for vocalists and vocal educators, this online library includes Vocal Jazz Online, Vocal Musicianship Academy, Vocal Jazz Summer Camp and Songwriting Workshop. Though most of Helm's 25-year span of musical achievements as a Jazz Vocal Musician specializing in Classic, Traditional jazz standard and original repertoire to critical acclaim, she also has touring, recording and performing credits in many genres -- including R&B, Neo-Soul, and Pop, Theater and Opera. She holds a B.M. in Film Scoring/Voice from Berklee College of Music, and an M.M. in Jazz Performance/Voice from East Carolina University. She recently completed coursework in doctoral studies toward a Doctor of Musical Arts, Music Education degree at Boston University, with an eye on completion in 2017. Helm is an Assistant Professor in the Department of Music at North Carolina Central University in Durham, and directs their NCCU Vocal Jazz Ensemble. Since 2007, Lenora now makes Durham, NC her home - where she lives with her husband, Fred Hammonds. Helm's achievements in music have spanned more than two decades garnering her inclusion as a subject of biographical record, for *Who's Who in America*, *Who's Who in American Women* and *Who's Who in the World*. Learn more at [www.LenoraHelm.com](http://www.LenoraHelm.com).

## **Lenora Helm Hammonds (*Teaching Bio*)**

Professor Lenora Helm Hammonds is an educator, vocal musician, composer, lyricist, arranger, teaching artist, former U.S. Jazz Ambassador (1998-99) and a native of Chicago, Illinois. She was the first African-American woman to graduate from Berklee College of Music with a B.M. in Film Music Scoring/Voice, a degree she earned in just three years. Helm earned her Master of Music degree in Jazz Performance from East Carolina University in Greenville, NC, and in doing so, an induction into the prestigious music honor societies, Pi Kappa Lambda and The Golden Key International Honor Society, for academic excellence. She recently completed coursework in doctoral studies toward a Doctor of Musical Arts, Music Education degree at Boston University, with an eye on completion in 2017. Other formal studies include completion of Contemporary Commercial Music (CCM) Vocal Pedagogy coursework at Level 1 of Somatic Voicework™, and time studying Indian classical voice at the Jazz India Vocal Institute in Mumbai, India. She has been a teaching artist for arts organizations including Carnegie Hall, Brooklyn Philharmonic, Schomburg Center's Junior Scholar's Program, Def Dance Jam Workshop and Young Audiences New York. In 2005, Helm Hammonds became an Instructor on the faculty of North Carolina Central University's (NCCU) Jazz Studies program and Music Department in Durham, North Carolina. She was promoted in 2013 to the rank of tenure-track Assistant Professor. Her service at NCCU includes directing the award-winning NCCU Vocal Jazz Ensemble and a number of academic and student initiatives, including the planning, design and coordination of their new Teaching Artist Certificate program, and Global Citizen Certificate on-boarding course. Her duties include teaching jazz and classical vocal performance, songwriting, vocal jazz and rhythm section arranging, vocal combo, and jazz vocal ear training. She co-authored and team teaches two courses in globally networked classrooms: *Composing, Arranging and Songwriting in a Global Network* and *Jazz! Born in American, Created Internationally*. Recent awards and recognition include the 2016-17 Fulbright Senior Specialist appointment with Royal

Academy of Music, Aarhus/Alborg, Denmark, the NCCU 2015 Excellence in Teaching Award, 2015 UNC Global Educator Fellow and the 2014 Salzburg Global Citizen Fellow.

Since 2011, a number of new projects, marrying Lenora's intrigue with distance education, and the intersection of Jazz, new media and global citizenry, have created a niche of opportunity and focus. She was elected to lead a team of educators from three universities on three continents (U.S. South Africa and Denmark) to create Humanities coursework through globally networked learning environments (GNLE) for the Collaborative Online Institute for Learning (COIL) through the State University of New York (SUNY). The COIL project culminates in newly created humanities courses on the respective campuses, while establishing new paradigms for educators making cultural connections through GNLE's. The research and study findings from the COIL project were published in 2014 and 2015. A strong personal philosophy of education for all, Lenora's dream for creating access to under-served global populations interested in vocal jazz education was realized in the creation of a library of online vocal training programs at [www.LenoraHelm.online](http://www.LenoraHelm.online). A virtual boot camp for vocalists and vocal educators, this online library includes Vocal Jazz Online, Vocal Musicianship Academy, Vocal Jazz Summer Camp and Songwriting Workshop.

Professionally known as Lenora Zenzalai Helm, her career highlights include jazz composer awards from Chamber Music America/Doris Duke's New Jazz Works and selection as a MacDowell Colony Composer Fellow. Her sixth and latest CD, *I Love Myself When I'm Laughing*, was listed on Independent Ear's [30 Recommended 2012 Record Releases](#) amongst an esteemed list of jazz artists. This recording also joined the distinction with her previous releases (in 2003 and 2004) garnering inclusion on the 2013 GRAMMY ballot for consideration of nomination in vocal jazz and arranging categories. As a TV and film music composer, most recent music credits include writing the musical score for the children's play, *Indigo Blue: A Reimagining of the Pied Piper* for Walltown Children's Theater, Durham, NC. Other notable composition credits include Ms. Helm's compositions featured in several Black History Month promo

campaigns on the ESPN network. Helm has served on the board of Classical Voice of North Carolina (CVNC.org), an online arts journal for North Carolina. She was a past president and board member of International Women in Jazz, and has served on the boards of New York City Arts in Education Roundtable, and GRAMMY in the Schools. Visit her at [www.LenoraHelm.com](http://www.LenoraHelm.com)