

Justine F. Chen, composer

Native New Yorker composer/violinist **Justine F. Chen** has been the recipient of numerous prestigious awards and commissions, including prizes from BMI and ASCAP. She has been commissioned and performed by New York City Opera, New York City Ballet, The Juilliard School, New York Festival of Song, New Juilliard Ensemble, Washington Ballet, Brooklyn Philharmonic, FLUX Quartet, Concertante, Long Leaf Opera, American Lyric Theater, Chants Libres (Montréal), and Tapestry New Opera (Toronto).



She studied violin and composition at the pre-college division of The Juilliard School, and trained at the School of American Ballet. As a dancer, she performed in various productions with New York City Ballet at the New York State Theater. Among her principal composition teachers are Robert Beaser, David Diamond, and Andrew Thomas.

Because of her unique inter-disciplinary background, Ms. Chen has a keen interest in artistic collaborations. To this end, she has written incidental music for numerous theatrical productions including Arthur Miller's *The Crucible* and Shakespeare's *Macbeth*. In 2002, Justine's incidental music for James Glossman's award-winning adaptation of Jim Lehrer's novel, *The Special Prisoner*, juxtaposed soundscapes of the modern world with the musical traditions of Noh theater. Critics wrote "... A distinct asset is the atmospheric original score, performed by composer Justine Chen, who uses ... traditional kabuki sound effects." (*Variety.com*). In 2001, she collaborated with digital artist Ye Won Cho on a short animation *Trilemma*, which was selected for and screened at such prestigious festivals as the Hiroshima Animation Festival, the New York Expo, the Student Academy Awards, Anima Mundi in South America, and broadcast on PBS in "Reel New York" June 2002.

Her collaboration with choreographer Katarzyna Skarpetowska *Perpetual Flux*, premiered at Alice Tully Hall in 1998, was subsequently programmed on Juilliard's Summer Dance Tour. Other collaborations include *Of Roots and Stones*, a dance piece with Iyun Harrison (Alvin Ailey), performed in the Juilliard Spring Dance Concert, by the Juilliard Dance Ensemble and Orchestra at the Juilliard Theater in 2000. On this piece, the *New York Times* wrote, "Justine Fang Chen... blended popular dance rhythms into the kind of propulsive, emotionally resonant score that choreographers tend to dream of." In 2004, she collaborated with choreographer Adam Houglund on a commission from the New York Choreographic Institute, in conjunction with New York City Ballet and The Juilliard School.

As an accomplished violinist, she has performed worldwide and specializes in the performance and interpretation of contemporary music. She recently performed at the Darmstadt Ferienkurse, and also with ICE as one of the 6 violinists at the US premiere of James Dillon's much-anticipated *Nine Rivers*. As a scholar, she has lectured on electronic music, and Mario Davidovsky and his *Synchronisms* series. Since 1999, she has been actively studying the intricacies of interactive computer music program MAX/MSP. Her studies, guided by Mari Kimura, cutting-edge violinist and MAX/MSP programmer, has resulted in the creation of several interactive pieces, including a computer-enhanced chamber opera for The Juilliard School. This chamber opera, *The Maiden Tower*, was also presented as a part of New York City Opera's VOX: Showcasing American Composers in May 2006.

Scenes from *The Maiden Tower* were presented by Montréal's premiere contemporary opera company, Chants Libres, in December 2008.

As composer-in-residence for Long Leaf Opera 2007-2008, she was commissioned to write a youth opera. On her opera, the Classical Voice of North Carolina wrote, "... a promise of outstanding hope for the musical and theatrical future of America and the world. ... a show that was both charming and provocative... practical and entrancing."

May 2008, scenes from her second opera, *Jeanne*, based on the life of Joan of Arc, were performed by New York City Opera in their VOX 2008 Showcase, and was described by the New York Times as "lyrical, atmospheric... striking... Throughout, Ms. Chen balances despair and humor."

Notable recent projects include a piece for the world renowned JACK Quartet commissioned by American Composer's Orchestra, a chamber opera based on the life of Charles Darwin, and a commission from Taiwan's prestigious SpringAutumnMusic Festival for a piece for guzheng and string quartet, which was premiered at the Hong Gah Museum in Taipei, Taiwan.

Ms. Chen served has been Resident Artist at American Lyric Theater since 2012, where she is collaborating with librettist David Simpatico on a full-length opera based on the life of computer scientist Alan Turing.

In 2005, she completed her doctoral studies in composition at The Juilliard School, where she also earned her Bachelor's and Master's degrees in violin and composition.

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