



Jenny Q Chai
contemporary pianist

Jenny Q Chai

www.jennychai.com

BIOGRAPHY

Hailed as a “brilliant and fearless young performer,” **Jenny Q Chai** is an active pianist specializing in contemporary music. Recipient of the Yvar Mikhashoff Trust’s 2011 Pianist/Composer Commissioning Project, first prize winner of the Keys to the Future Contemporary Solo Piano Festival, and recipient of the DAAD Arts and Performance award in 2010, Chai has premiered, most notably, *Life Sketches* by Nils Vigeland, *Exercise in Deism* by John Slover, *Intimate Rejection* by Ashley Fu-Tsun Wang, and *Blue Inscription* by Scott Wollschleger. Chai has also premiered "Marriage (Mile 58) Section F" from *The Road* by Frederick Rzewski in Ghent, Belgium, where she was given the Logos Award for the best performance of 2008. Recently, Chai had the privilege of introducing the concept of prepared piano to a Chinese audience, with the world premiere of *Mallet Dance* by John Slover, in Shanghai Concert Hall.

Chai began playing the piano, under her mother’s tutelage, at the age of 3. By age 6, she was selected out of thousands of applicants by the Shanghai Music Conservatory to be one of eleven piano students and studied under Prof. Zhijue Chao, Prof. Qinghua Wang, Prof. Jianzhong Wang, Prof. Zijie Wu and Prof. Yuqing Zhang. At the tender age of 13, Chai began studies at the small, prestigious Curtis Institute of Music in Philadelphia, accompanied by her father, sculptor Biao Chai. There Chai spent seven years studying with the prolific Classical pianist and conductor Seymour Lipkin.

Four years later, Chai began to question whether music was the path for her. Two dark years followed, in which Chai avoided the piano. Then, by chance, the summer before her final year at Curtis, Chai heard a recording of Chopin playing in the background at a Shanghai tea house. “The tears gushed out of my eyes like an unexpected summer storm,” says Chai. “That was the moment that I knew I wanted to be a pianist.” Returning to Curtis, Chai “practiced like crazy,” and graduated a more mature and vibrant artist.

Receiving a full scholarship, Chai decided to study for her Master’s degree at the Manhattan School of Music in New York City under the world-renowned pedagogue Solomon Mikowsky. Yearning for something beyond the standard classical repertoire, Chai found a proficient mentor in Nils Vigeland, chair of composition at MSM, under whose support Chai’s long-held affinity for contemporary music was able to bloom. For her doctorate studies (also at MSM), Chai made the bold decision to play only contemporary music, under the guidance of contemporary pianist Anthony de Mare.

As part of her doctorate program, Chai moved abroad to Germany, where she worked with the great contemporary pianist Pierre-Laurent Aimard, and performed in Ensemble 20/21, directed by David Smeyers, as well as the group Musikfabrik. In what is already an illustrious career, Chai has been covered on major medium throughout the U.S., China, and Europe, including *Time Out New York*, *Shanghai Culture*, and *Cologne Daily News*, and her performances of contemporary music have been broadcast in Italy, Germany, China, and the U.S. Her talents have been showcased on recordings with Ensemble 20/21 on the Deutschlandfunk label (performing music by Hanns Eisler) and as solo pianist/vocalist on ArpaViva’s *New York Love Songs*.

For Chai, near-total immersion in the contemporary music world has only enhanced her appreciation of the classical repertoire. “I feel a sense of contentment programming creative concerts, mixing and matching old and new works, so as to highlight what is most special in each piece. After all, nothing comes from nothing, and new music is very much connected to that which came before.”

Now splitting her time between the U.S. and China, Chai co-directs the New York City-based contemporary music organization Ear to Mind, and is founder of FaceArt Music Association in Shanghai. In an Ear to Mind performance this April, Chai will premiere three new works, including *Five Pieces (for Jenny Q Chai)* by Nils Vigeland.

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Contemporary

Thomas **Adès**

Traced Overhead

Louis **Andriessen**

Image de Moreau

André **Boucourechliev**

Orion III

Pierre **Boulez**

Douze Notations

Incises

“Trope” from Sonata No. 3

John **Cage**

The Wonderful Widow of Eighteen Springs

Nowth upon Nacht

Triple-Paced No. 2, for prepared piano

Tossed As It Is Untroubled, for prepared piano

Music for Marcel Duchamp, for prepared piano

Henri **Dutilleux**

Chorale et Variations

Morton **Feldman**

Piano

Intermission 3

Extensions 3

Ryan **Francis**

Etude No. 3 “La Fee Verte”

Annie **Gosfield**

Brooklyn, Oct. 5, 1941

Robin **Hoffmann**

Der Unsichtbare

György **Kurtág**

Selections from *Játékok* (list available upon request)

Helmut **Lachenmann**

Fünf Variationen über ein Thema von Franz Schubert

Guero

Lei **Liang**

My Windows

György **Ligeti**

Etude No. 1, No. 2, No. 17

Maurice **Ohana**

Preludes

James **Mobberly**

Caution to the Winds

David **Rakowski**

E-Machines (Etude No. 1)

Wolfgang **Rihm**

Zwiesprache

Klavierstück No. 5

Fredrick **Rzewski**

Kreutzer Sonata

Karlheinz **Stockhausen**

Klavierstück VIII

Marco **Stroppa**

From *Miniature Estrose*:

“Tangata Manu”

“Innige Cavatina”

Bright **Sheng**

My Song

Nils **Vigeland**

Life Sketches

L'Empire Luminaire (Hommage à René Magritte)

Sonata

Chou **Wen-chung**

The Willows Are New

Chen **Yi**

DuoYe

REPERTOIRE (*continued*)

20th-century

Béla **Bartók**
Elegies

Alban **Berg**
Sonata, Op. 1

Claude **Debussy**
6 Études
Images, Bk. 1
Preludes, selections
Pour le Piano

Charles **Ives**
“The Alcotts” from Piano Sonata No. 2
selected *Songs*

Olivier **Messiaen**
Catalogue des Oiseaux, selections
Cantéyodjayâ
“Regard de l'Esprit de Joie”
from *Vingt regards sur l'enfant-Jésus*

Sergei **Prokofiev**
Sonata No. 3, No. 7

Maurice **Ravel**
Miroirs
Sonatine

Arnold **Schönberg**
Op. 11
Op. 19
Suite, op. 25

Alexander **Scriabin**
Etude Op. 42, No. 5

Written for Jenny Q Chai

Jean-Olivier **Begin**
Scatula Nera

Julien **Jamet**
Frison

Victoria **Jordanova**
From *New York Love Songs*:
“Moon”
“Loveling”
“Bite”
“Chinese Laundry Across the Street”

Dagfinn **Koch**
Hommage an Edvard Hagerup Grieg

Hartmut **Schulz**
Fragmenter fra Requiem

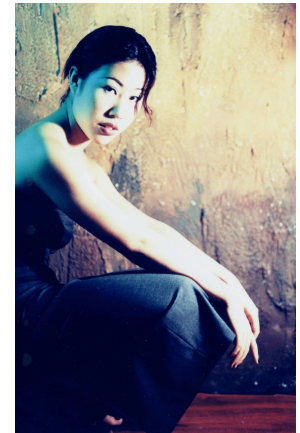
John **Slover**
“Mallet Dance”
“Exercise in Deism”

Nils **Vigeland**
Five Pieces (for Jenny Q Chai)

Ashley Fu-Tsun **Wang**
Intimate Rejection

Written by Jenny Q Chai

“Colors”
“Paleta”



PRESS AND INFORMATION

"Jenny Q Chai opened the concert playing two of Ligeti's *Études* with rich tone and rhythmic clarity; especially strong was her "Cordes à vide." That piece was played by Ms. Moore at the first Keys to the Future festival. It's always good to hear it again." - *The New York Times*

"Chai's mysterious piano work has great potential to enhance the experience of viewing the Phillips Collection's similarly unique collection of contemporary art." - Editor's Pick Event, *Bourgeon Arts Magazine*

"Hot contemporary pianist Jenny Q Chai spins Roulette..." - *Time Out New York*

"Jenny Q Chai is an extraordinary pianist with limitless imagination" - *Valladolid Daily News*

"I am pleased to hear Jenny Q Chai sing in Chinese in Jordanova's "Moon," based on lyrics from, appropriately enough, the Song Dynasty. The vocalises and sighs here are part of an almost anti-composed music, minimal and sleek." - David Wolman, *Fanfare Magazine*

"On this *New Sounds*, hear some unconventional piano works...as played by Jenny Q Chai from a collection of works, *New York Love Songs*." - *WNYC*

"A serious pianist with a passion for new music." - Pianist Pierre-Laurent Aimard

"...a brilliant and fearless young performer..." - Composer Robert Carl

"The astute quality that infuses her versatile musical personality reveals itself time and time again" - Anthony de Mare

"It is quite remarkable to hear a performer of her technical and interpretive skills now addressing herself to a repertoire of music composed within the last 100 years, with special emphasis on music of the last thirty." - Composer Nils Vigeland

"She really presented the colorful musical images with clear layers." - Composer Chen Yi

Press Contact:
Meg Wilhoite, kleineKultur Media Relations
309 East 75th st
New York, NY 10021
megwilhoite@gmail[dot]com (preferred method)
(212) 203-7211

Jenny Q Chai's affiliated organizations:

FaceArt Music InterNations (Shanghai)
Co-founder (www.faceart.co)

Ear to Mind (New York City)
Board of Directors (www.eartomind.org)



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