

East Asian American soprano Abagael Cheng is a singing artist who strives to break the boundaries of traditional performance art and bring social activism to the forefront of her work. Ms. Cheng sees her role in social justice and performance art to be one and the same: that of a storyteller. She works towards deepening relationships within and between communities by engaging audiences with relatable narratives and centering collaboration in her productions.

During the 2021-22 season, she will appear as Chocholka the Hen and the Blue Dragonfly in Janáček's *The Cunning Little Vixen*, at Bard College Conservatory of Music, directed by Doug Fitch. Previous season highlights include a debut as Monica in Menotti's *The Medium* at Oberlin Conservatory; performing in Handel's *Ariodante* as Dalinda, conducted by Miah Im; and taking on the role of Fraulein Kost in Kandor's *Cabaret*, directed by Paul Moser.

Ms. Cheng curates her own productions as a form of ultimate collaboration in all aspects of the art, combining song and poetry to create unique narratives. This discovery began with her degree recital, *Giving her a voice*, at Oberlin Conservatory, the purpose of which was to promote and celebrate women composers, featuring only works by Clara Schumann, Alma Mahler, Lili Boulanger, and Libby Larsen. Furthermore, this project sought to bring the audience's attention to local women-owned businesses in the town of Oberlin, in order to materially support women in their community. During the pandemic, she produced her own recital, *Spirals*, at the Greenwich House Music School, which was developed as a processing tool for a personal experience of anxiety, isolation, and grief. The production demonstrates the journey of creating one's own sense of closure, exploring how the work of healing can generate a new and empowered sense of self.

Ms. Cheng's particular interest in contemporary music has led her to work closely with up-and-coming composers. As part of the collaborative effort in *Spirals*, she premiered an original work for electronics and voice by composer Kari Watson called *Facing Shadows*, with text by Ms. Cheng's aunt about their shared experience of societal shaming of women's bodies. Ms. Cheng combines her connection to contemporary music with that of the Baroque genre. Consequently, concert highlights include Bach's Cantata BWV 147, "Herz und Mund und Tat und Leben," with the Bard Baroque Ensemble, conducted by Renée Anne Louprette; *Vessel* by Kati Agócs, with the Oberlin Sinfonietta, conducted by Timothy Weiss; and the soprano solo and mezzo solo of Bach's Cantata BWV 150, "Nach dir, Herr, verlanget mich," conducted by Jana Ballard.

A New York City-based artist, Ms. Cheng holds a Bachelor of Music in Vocal Performance and a Bachelor of Arts in Mathematics from Oberlin College & Conservatory. She is currently pursuing her Master's degree in the Graduate Vocal Arts Program at Bard College Conservatory of Music, where she studies under the tutelage of Stephanie Blythe, Kayo Iwama, Erika Switzer, and Lucy Fitz Gibbon. For more information, visit [www.abagaelcheng.com](http://www.abagaelcheng.com).

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