

Short Bio:

STEPHANIE CHOU is a Chinese-American jazz composer/saxophonist/singer who blends influences from her Chinese heritage with Western jazz and pop to create a bracingly original sound that draws audiences across the globe. She's performed at Carnegie Hall, Lincoln Center, B.B. King's, Joe's Pub, and in jazz festivals across the US and Asia where her music creates immediate cross-cultural connections and continues to expand her fanbase.

Comfort Girl, her bold, innovative song-cycle inspired by true stories of Asian women abducted into sexual slavery during WWII, premiered at Joe's Pub at the Public Theatre. It is not only a groundbreaking fusion of East-West musical traditions, but has also sparked public dialogue on a formerly taboo subject that still resonates globally for women today. DownBeat called it "A stunning work that...shines light on a dark chapter of history." It's been commissioned as an opera by the American Opera Project.

Her quintet combines saxophone and vocals in Mandarin/English with Chinese violin (erhu), viola, and a jazz rhythm section. Chou's albums include *Prime Knot* (featuring Marcus Printup) and *Asymptote*, which focused on jazz reinventions of classic Chinese folk songs and featured GRAMMY-nominated musicians Kenny Wollesen and John Escreet, and erhu/viola virtuoso Andy Lin. Her jazz-ballet *CforG* was commissioned by ABT ballerina Susan Jaffe. <http://www.stephaniechoumusic.com/>

Long Bio:

Stephanie Chou is an American composer, saxophonist, and singer based in New York City. She blends Chinese musical influences with Western jazz and pop to create a unique and vibrant musical world. Chou has performed at Carnegie Hall, Lincoln Center, B.B. King's, Joe's Pub, Miller Theater, and at music festivals in New Orleans, Chicago, Vermont (Discover Jazz), Pennsylvania (Musikfest) and NY (Lake George Jazz Festival). She also tours with her band in Europe and China, where her music creates immediate cross-cultural connections and continues to expand her fanbase.

She was mentored by legendary songwriter/musician Allen Toussaint, who encouraged her to develop her own artistic voice. She later founded the Stephanie Chou Ensemble, a chamber quintet that combines saxophone and vocals in English and Mandarin with Chinese violin (erhu), viola, and a jazz rhythm section. Her debut album *Prime Knot* featured GRAMMY-nominated trumpeter Marcus Printup (Jazz at Lincoln Center Orchestra), and *C for G*, her ballet work, was commissioned and choreographed by American Ballet Theatre Artistic Director and former principal ballerina Susan Jaffe. Her second CD, *Asymptote*, focused on jazz reinventions of classic Chinese folk songs and

featured GRAMMY-nominated musicians Kenny Wollesen and John Escreet, and erhu virtuoso Andy Lin. Her current band also includes Obie-award winning pianist/music-director Or Matias.

Chou has shared the stage or recorded with jazz greats Bobby Watson, Kevin Hays, and Curtis Fuller. Her music was included in PBS's documentary series *Roadtrip Nation*. In addition to her own projects, she often composes works on commission for dance companies. GRAMMY-winning producer/engineer Roy Hendrickson has produced her recordings from the last 7 years, including *Comfort Girl*, *Asymptote*, *Continuum Hypothesis* (a commission for Earthwise Productions), and *Millennial Woman* (recorded with members of the CHIC band).

Chou believes in the power of music to create social change. *Comfort Girl*, her 80-minute song cycle exploring the lives of Chinese "comfort women" abducted into sexual slavery by the Japanese army during WWII, is not only a groundbreaking fusion of East-West musical traditions, but has also sparked public dialogue on a formerly taboo subject that still resonates globally for women today. DownBeat magazine called it, "A stunning work that...shines light on a dark chapter of history." *Comfort Girl* was commissioned by the American Composers Forum and premiered at Joe's Pub at the Public Theater. This project saw the addition of Broadway singer Orville Mendoza (*Peter and the Starcatchers; Pacific Overtures*) to her band. Roy Hendrickson is currently producing a studio recording of *Comfort Girl*.

Comfort Girl is currently being developed into an opera, *Jade Star Hotel*, with librettist Susan Kander (niece of Broadway theater composer John Kander of Kander & Ebb), commissioned by the American Opera Project. It's funded through grants from the the New York State Council on the Arts, OPERA America's Opera Grant for Women Composers, and the MAP Fund. *Jade Star Hotel* will premiere in 2025.

Chou is also currently completing commissions for White Snake Projects (a Boston-based opera company) and INTERWOVEN (a cross-cultural world music ensemble), with premieres in 2023-24.

She's received grants and commissions from: Jerome Foundation, American Composers Forum, Chamber Music America, Lower Manhattan Cultural Council, OPERA America, New York State Council on the Arts, Virginia B. Toulmin Foundation, the MAP Fund, Puffin Foundation, and more.

As an educator, Stephanie Chou and her band have presented many clinics and masterclasses on blending culture and music. Stephanie holds a BA in Mathematics from Columbia University. She also completed graduate studies in Music Composition at the City College of New York.

<http://www.stephaniechoumusic.com/>