Gloria Cheng – short bio [300 words]

Acclaimed for performances of “commanding technique, color, and imagination” (*The New York Times*), GRAMMY- and Emmy-winning pianist **Gloria Cheng** is a leading proponent of the music of our time. Over a varied and distinguished career, she has collaborated with renowned composers across the stylistic spectrum, premiering works by John Adams, Thomas Adès, Pierre Boulez, Anthony Davis, Esa-Pekka Salonen, Steven Stucky, John Williams, and many others. *The Washington Post* has called her playing “spectacular… emotionally engaging.”

Gloria has appeared as a concerto soloist with the Los Angeles Philharmonic under Boulez and Zubin Mehta, and on the orchestra’s legendary Green Umbrella series with Salonen and Oliver Knussen. She has appeared in recital on the Chicago Humanities Festival, William Kapell Festival, Tanglewood Festival of Contemporary Music, and Radio France, and multiple times on the Other Minds and Ojai Music Festivals.

Winner of the Best Instrumental Soloist Performance (without orchestra) GRAMMY for her 2008 recording,*Piano Music of Salonen, Stucky, and Lutosławski*, she received a second nomination for her 2013 disc, *The Edge of Light: Messiaen I Saariaho*.

Two of her most distinctive projects involve eminent composers working outside their usual comfort zones. For *MONTAGE: Great Film Composers and the Piano*, she enlisted Bruce Broughton, Don Davis, Alexandre Desplat, Michael Giacchino, Randy Newman, and John Williams to compose new works for solo piano, captured in a documentary that earned her a 2018 Los Angeles Area Emmy.

In a similar vein, Gloria commissioned six distinguished improvising artists — Anthony Davis, Jon Jang, James Newton, Arturo O’Farrill, Linda May Han Oh, and Gernot Wolfgang — to compose fully-notated solo works for her latest album, *Root Progressions*, released in January 2025 on the Biophilia label.

Gloria’s education includes a B.A. in Economics from Stanford University, a Woolley Scholarship for study in Paris, and graduate degrees in performance from UCLA and the University of Southern California, where her teachers included Aube Tzerko and John Perry. Her popular classes and programs at the UCLA Herb Alpert School of Music bring students together with noted performers, composers, and scholars.

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Gloria Cheng – full-length bio [700 words]

Acclaimed for performances of “commanding technique, color, and imagination” (*The New York Times*), GRAMMY- and Emmy-winning pianist **Gloria Cheng** is a leading proponent of the music of our time. Over a varied and distinguished career, she has collaborated with renowned composers across the stylistic spectrum, premiering works by John Adams, Thomas Adès, Pierre Boulez, Anthony Davis, Esa-Pekka Salonen, Steven Stucky, John Williams, and many others.

*The Washington Post* has called her playing “spectacular,” while *San Francisco Classical Voice* cited her as “a pianist who consistently fuses deep emotionality with exacting precision.”

Her countless premieres and dedications include John Williams’ *Prelude and Scherzo for Piano and Orchestra* (dedicated to her and pianist Lang Lang), Salonen’s *Dichotomie*, and Pierre Boulez’s *Courtes dérives à partir d’Éclat*. She commissioned Thomas Adès to create a 2-piano arrangement of *Concert Paraphrase on Powder Her Face*, and premiered it with the composer on the Piano Spheres series. John Adams composed *Hallelujah Junction* for her and Grant Gershon, who jointly premiered the two-piano work at the Getty Center.

Gloria has appeared as soloist with the Los Angeles Philharmonic under Zubin Mehta, and in Olivier Messiaen’s *Oiseaux exotiques* with Boulez. On the LA Phil’s famed Green Umbrella series, Oliver Knussen conducted her in Elliott Carter’s *Double Concerto for Piano and Harpsichord*; she also appeared as soloist in John Cage’s *Concerto for Prepared Piano*, led by Jeffrey Milarsky. Other concerto appearances include the Seattle Modern Orchestra, Louisville and Shanghai Orchestras; the Orquestra Simfònica del Valles in Barcelona; and the Indianapolis, Pasadena, Long Beach, and Pacific Symphonies.

From her home base of Los Angeles she has been a principal artist with the Piano Spheres series, Jacaranda Music, and Monday Evening Concerts. She has also given recitals at the Ojai Music Festival, Chicago Humanities Festival, William Kapell Festival, Tanglewood Festival of Contemporary Music, and Radio France. In 2025, with the Dutch pianist Ralph van Raat, she performed a Boulez centennial program on the Other Minds Festival, UCLA Center for the Art of Performance series, and at the Amsterdam Muziekgebouw and Athens Stavros Niarchos Alternative Stage.

Winner of the Best Instrumental Soloist Performance (without orchestra) GRAMMY for her 2008 recording,*Piano Music of Salonen, Stucky, and Lutosławski*, she received a second nomination for her 2013 disc, *The Edge of Light: Messiaen I Saariaho*.

In 2018, Gloria released *Garlands for Steven Stucky*, her star-studded, poignant CD tribute to the late composer by 32 of his friends and former students. Proceeds support the Los Angeles Philharmonic’s Steven Stucky Composer Fellowship Fund, which engages young composers in multi-year educational programs with the orchestra.

Two of her most distinctive projects involve eminent composers working outside their usual comfort zones. For *MONTAGE: Great Film Composers and the Piano*, she enlisted Bruce Broughton, Don Davis, Alexandre Desplat, Michael Giacchino,Randy Newman, and John Williams to compose new works for solo piano, captured in a short documentary that earned her a 2018 Los Angeles Area Emmy.

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Beyond her role as a performer, she has produced *Music at Black Mountain College* for the Armand Hammer Museum’s related exhibit; *BEYOND MUSIC: Composition and Performance in the Age of Augmented Reality* at UCLA (an international gathering of composers and media artists featuring Kaija Saariaho and Jean-Baptiste Barrière); and*Inside the (G)Earbox*, a daylong UCLA symposium marking John Adams’s 70th birthday.

Born to parents from Shanghai, Gloria Cheng began piano lessons at age four, taught by her mother. When she was thirteen, her teacher Isabelle Sant’Ambrogio introduced her to the music of Henry Cowell, a pioneer of modern piano techniques, along with works by Paul Creston, Walter Piston, and other 20th-century composers.

Gloria received a B.A. in Economics from Stanford University, originally planning to enter an M.B.A. program. Instead, she pursued further training in piano, earning a Woolley Scholarship for study in Paris. She holds graduate degrees in performance from UCLA and the University of Southern California, where her teachers included Aube Tzerko and John Perry. Her much sought-after classes and programs at the UCLA Herb Alpert School of Music bring students together with noted performers, composers, and scholars.