

Helen Sung

2022 NAFME All-National
Jazz Ensemble Soloist

Helen Sung is an acclaimed pianist and composer. Born and raised in Houston, TX, she studied classical piano and violin and attended Houston's renowned High School for the Performing & Visual Arts (HSPVA). Continuing her classical piano studies at the University of

Texas at Austin, a chance meeting with jazz music caused an eventual course change: she went on to graduate from the Thelonious Monk Institute of Jazz Performance (at the New England Conservatory) and win the Kennedy Center's Mary Lou Williams Jazz Piano Competition.

Now based in New York City, Helen has worked with such luminaries as the late Clark Terry, Wayne Shorter, Ron Carter, Wynton Marsalis (who named her as one of his "*Who's Got Next: Jazz Musicians to Watch*"), MacArthur Fellows Regina Carter and Cecile McLorin Salvant, and Terri Lyne Carrington's Grammy-winning "Mosaic Project." Helen and her band have performed at major festivals/venues including Newport, Monterey, SFJAZZ, Disney Hall, and Carnegie Hall. Internationally, her "NuGenerations" Project toured southern Africa as a U.S. State Department Jazz Ambassador, and recent engagements include debuts at the London Jazz Festival, Jazz at Lincoln Center Shanghai, Blue Note Beijing, and the Sydney International Women's Jazz Festival. In addition, she currently performs with fine ensembles including the Mingus Big Band and McLorin Salvant's *Ogresse*.

Helen followed her jazz chart-topping Concord Jazz release *Anthem For A New Day* with *Sung With Words*, a collaborative project with the celebrated American poet Dana Gioia, supported by a Chamber Music America/Doris Duke Foundation New Jazz Works grant. In 2020 she was awarded an NYC Women's Fund grant for *Quartet²*: a project combining her jazz quartet with a string quartet. Helen has also completed composition commissions for the West Chester University Poetry Conference, North Coast Brewing Company, JazzReach, and a composer residency at Flushing Town Hall.

Inspired by her experience at the Monk Institute, she stays involved in music education through residencies and workshops, and also produced a Jazz Week program benefiting underserved youth in Camden, NJ. In 2017, the University of Texas College of Fine Arts awarded her its most prestigious honor – the E. William Doty Distinguished Alumna Award, and HSPVA inducted her into its Jazz Hall of Fame. She has served on the jazz faculties at the Berklee College of Music, the Juilliard School, and Columbia University, where she also was the inaugural jazz artist-in-residence at Columbia's prestigious Zuckerman Institute in 2019. Helen was named a Steinway Artist in 2020.

