

Nafset Chenib — Academic Curriculum Vitae

Soprano · Voice Educator · PhD in Musicology

Education

Mozarteum University, Salzburg, Austria

Postgraduate Certificate (PGL), Voice, summa cum laude (2025). Mentor: Allison Oakes.

The Graduate Center, City University of New York, New York, NY

PhD in Musicology, dissertation defended with distinction (2024). Advisor: Prof. Joseph N. Straus.

Dissertation: "Unveiling Iolanta: Blindness in Nineteenth-Century Opera."

Read the dissertation: https://academicworks.cuny.edu/gc_etds/5898/

Dissertation abstract: *This dissertation explores the main tropes of representing and narrating blindness in nineteenth-century opera and fictional literature, with a particular emphasis on Tchaikovsky's 1892 one-act opera Iolanta and its blind protagonist. Examination of the production history of Iolanta reveals that misrepresentations and misconceptions ingrained within Tchaikovsky's libretto and music have governed directorial choices, giving rise to a homogeneous, predominantly unfavorable portrayal of blindness on the stage. I suggest an approach to the opera that is more consonant with the lived experience of blindness.*

The Graduate Center, City University of New York, New York, NY

Master of Philosophy, Musicology, summa cum laude (2023). Advisor: Prof. Joseph N. Straus.

Manhattan School of Music, New York, NY

Professional Studies, Vocal Performance, summa cum laude (2018). Mentor: Maitland Peters.

Victor Popov Academy of Choral Arts, Moscow, Russia

Master of Music, Vocal Performance and Teaching, summa cum laude (2014). Mentor: Tatiana Baykova. Thesis: "The Soprano Part in Bach's Passions." Advisor: Dmitry Zotov.

Nikolay Rimsky-Korsakov Musical College, Krasnodar, Russia

Bachelor of Music, Vocal Arts, summa cum laude (2009). Mentor: Ivan Shulzhevsky.

Teaching Experience

Voice Teaching

Voice Faculty, Filomen M. D'Agostino Greenberg Music School (FMDG), New York, NY (2026–present)

Teach classical voice to blind and visually impaired students across a range of ages and levels, adapting instruction to a variety of non-visual learning methods, including but not limited to Braille music notation.

Private Voice Instructor (2011–present)

Individualized vocal coaching, employing exercises tailored to each student's needs and a thoughtful selection of repertoire.

Master Classes in Classical Singing

- Art Kovcheg Festival, Kazan, Russia (2018)
- Specialized School for Visually Impaired Children, Armavir, Russia (2016)

University Teaching

CUNY Senior Teaching Fellow, CUNY Graduate Center (2023–2024)

Mentored CUNY graduate teaching fellows who were teaching for the first time, providing assistance with syllabus and assignment design, general guidance, regular class observations, and support in resolving issues as they arose.

Graduate Teaching Fellow, Hunter College, CUNY (2021–2023)

Teacher of record with full responsibility for every aspect of the class.

- Music and Disability (graduate seminar, Fall 2021) — grounded in a cultural approach to disability, this course examined how disability shapes a composer's or performer's identity, musical performance and composition, and audience perception. Students engaged through in-class discussion, weekly readings and written assignments, presentations, and final projects that included formats like podcasts and adaptations of compositions tailored to disabled musicians.
- Music 101: Music Appreciation (undergraduate, 2021–2023) — a general-education course for non-majors offering a chronological survey of Western music history, developing students' ability to listen to, analyze, discuss, and write about music.

Teaching Assistant, City College of New York, CUNY (2020–2021)

Prepared instructional materials and handouts for Music Appreciation courses, graded assignments, and assessed the accessibility of learning materials to ensure all students could engage with the curriculum.

Academic Publications

"Unveiling Iolanta: Blindness in Nineteenth-Century Opera." PhD dissertation, The Graduate Center, City University of New York (2024).

Read the dissertation: https://academicworks.cuny.edu/gc_etds/5898/

"Entrapped in Darkness: Representations of Blindness in Tchaikovsky's Opera Iolanta." Paper presented at the American Musicological Society's Greater New York Chapter meeting (virtual), November 5, 2022. Awarded the Annual Student Paper Prize.

"The Soprano Part in Bach's Passions." MA thesis, Victor Popov Academy of Choral Arts, Moscow, Russia (2014).

Performance Experience

Soloist Appointment

Soloist (Soprano), St Petersburg State Philharmonic for Children and Youth (2021–2022)

With the Taurida State Symphony and the St Petersburg State Philharmonic for Children and Youth.

Opera and Theatre

- Tchaikovsky's *Iolanta* — title role of the blind princess (2021). International Choral Festival, Ivangorod Fortress, St Petersburg region, Russia.
- Ostrovsky's *Truth Is Good but Happiness Is Better* — the role of a singer (2015–2017). Chekhov Moscow Art Theater, Moscow, Russia.
- "Interiorization III" — Soloist (2015). New European Theater XXI festival, Garage Museum of Modern Art, Moscow, Russia.
- Ravel's *L'Enfant et les Sortilèges* — the Princess (2014). Victor Popov Academy of Choral Arts, Moscow, Russia.

Selected Concerts and Recitals

- Circassian Songs Recital, Circassian Culture Days Munich ("Tscherkessische Kulturtage München"), Munich, Germany (2026).
- Lecture-recital on female composers of the Western European classical tradition (2025). 69th Session of the UN Commission on the Status of Women, New York, NY.
- Arias & Art Songs, Mofet Hall, Rehovot, Israel (2019).
- Arias & Art Songs, Leyla Gencer Opera and Art Center, Istanbul, Turkey (2019).
- Arias & Art Songs, Manhattan School of Music, New York, NY (2017, 2018).
- Arias & Art Songs, with Adygea State Symphony (Khusniyarov), Grand Hall of the Adygea State Philharmonic, Maykop, Russia (2015, 2017).
- XI Winter Paralympic Games Closing Ceremony, Sochi, Russia (2014).
- Opera & Operetta Arias, Russia's UN Representative Residence, Geneva, Switzerland (2014).
- Opera & Operetta Arias, Russia's Consulate in Switzerland, Bern, Switzerland (2014).
- Sacred & Opera Arias, with Musica Viva (Rudin, Stravinsky), International House of Music, Moscow, Russia (2013, 2015).
- Mozart's Requiem, with Svetlanov State Symphony (Kontorovich, Petrov), Grand Hall of the Moscow State Conservatory, Moscow, Russia (2013, 2014).
- Arias & Art Songs, Teatro Massimo, Cagliari, Italy (2012).

Collaborations

Orchestras

Moscow Virtuosi, Svetlanov State Symphony, St. Petersburg State Symphony, Bolshoi Theater Chamber, Taurida State Symphony, Musica Viva, La Primavera.

Conductors

Vladimir Spivakov, Lev Kontorovich, Alexander Titov, Marius Stravinsky, Anatoly Levin, Aleksey Petrov, Alexander Rudin, Mikhail Golikov, Rustem Abyazov.

Singers

José Carreras, Daniil Shtoda, Nikolay Didenko, Mikhail Guzhov, Dmitry Karpov, Yulia Mennibaeva, Yaroslav Abaimov, Arsen Sogomonyan.

Master Classes

Mirella Freni, Jennifer Larmore, Reiner Weiss.

Selected Competitions

- Second Prize, VI Sviridov International Competition of Vocal Chamber Music (2017).
- Laureate, Music of Light International Music Festival (2013, 2014).
- Laureate, Muses of the World International Competition (2012).

Discography

Bestowing Light

With the International Taurida Symphony. Available on all major streaming platforms.

Spotify: <https://open.spotify.com/album/1S8yfhDi2stEIBXaz40TPk>

Selected Honors and Awards

- AMS Greater New York Chapter's Annual Student Paper Prize (2022).
- CUNY Graduate Center Fellowship (2019–2024).
- MSM Pablo Casals Award for Music Accomplishment and Human Endeavor (2018).
- Certificate of Recognition, California Department of Education, for a solo concert performance (2017).
- Honored Artist of the Republic of Adygea, granted by the President of the Republic (2015).
- Philanthropist International Award for Outstanding Achievements in Performing Arts (2015).
- Nikolay Ostrovsky International Award for Courage, Fortitude and Creative Success (2014).
- Victor Popov Award for Academic Excellence and Creative Potential (2012).

Professional and Service Activities

CUNY Graduate Center, Music Teaching Hub Development Team (2023–24)

Worked with colleagues across CUNY music schools to develop a website for open educational resources bringing together music teaching materials.

Research Interests

- Music and disability
- Historically informed performance
- Music and trauma
- Music and post-colonialism

Skills

Languages

English (fluent), German (C1), Italian (B1/B2), Russian (native), Circassian (native).

Instrument Proficiencies

Piano: competent level.