



# Bach Cantatas Website

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## Chloë Owen (Soprano)

**Born:** December 21, 1918 - Raleigh, North Carolina, USA

**Died:** April 28, 2010 - New York City, New York, USA

The American soprano and music pedagogue, Chloë [Chloe, Cloë] Owen was born in Raleigh, North Carolina into a musical family which shortly thereafter moved to Chattanooga, Tennessee. After early musical training and graduate work at the Peabody Conservatory, Chloe arrived in New York City, where her Town Hall recital in 1951 received critical acclaim. *The New York Times* wrote: “A beautiful voice! Rich and velvety in quality, ample in size, extensive in range... A handsome presence and temperament!”

Under Columbia Artists Management, Chlo Owen toured with Community Concerts nationally before embarking for Europe. There, her study with [Hans Hotter](#), [Germaine Lubin](#), and Giuseppe Pais led her to a warmly remembered opera, oratorio, concert and radio career of 19 years. Her concert and opera career was an almost exclusively European. She made her opera debut as Elsa in *Lohengrin* in Bern Stadttheater (where she became a regular), Switzerland. Her appearances at the Spoleto Festival of Two Worlds, Salzburg Festival, and concerts in Italy, Switzerland, Germany and Austria were extravagantly praised in the press. She sang and recorded with many celebrated conductors including [Ernest Ansermet](#), George Szell, and Wolfgang Martin, [Otto Ackermann](#), and was well known for her oratorio recordings with [Karl Richter](#). Her repertoire included 25 operas from [George Frideric Handel](#) to [Paul Hindemith](#), many major oratorios, and concert repertoire in four languages including many song cycles for orchestra and soprano.

Chloe Owen’s extraordinary range and vocal prowess allowed her to perform roles as diverse as the Queen of the Night in [W.A. Mozart](#)’s *Die Zauberflöte*, Micaela in *Carmen*, and Elsa in *Lohengrin*. She sang in the Salzburg Festival world premier of *Irische Legende* by Werner Egk, conducted by George Szell. American and European critics alike noted her artistry and passionate commitment to serving the intention of both composer and librettist, with her range, flexibility, stage presence, and exemplary diction. In some cases she created near-pandemonium with her sensational high Ds and Es. Upon her return to the USA, her Kostelnicka (from Janáček’s *Jenufa*) at Philharmonic Hall was heard and much admired by a famous *Jenufa*, Maria Jeritza.

After successful career in Europe, Chloe Owen returned to the USA, opened voice studios in New York and Boston, joining the music faculty of Boston University. Her many song recitals in both cities over the years, often accompanied by extraordinary pianist Barbara Karp, garnered high critical praise. *The Boston Globe* wrote: “Stunning!... intensity and abandon ... agility ...thrilling vocal opulence ...a marvel of sustained and dazzling quality.” She continued to collect rave reviews when many divas were content to rest on their laurels.

Chloe Owen was noted for her master-classes which were among the first to incorporate the Alexander technique in the art of singing. She worked her Alexander "charms" on all instruments of the orchestra, as well as voice. She taught privately in New York City and Los Angeles, and was stage director for Pacific Opera Encore Performances. In the eminent book, *The Art of the Song Recital*, (Emmons/Sonntag), one of Chloe's programs was quoted as being exemplary for selections in unusual programming. In addition to her active private teaching studio in New York City, she spent many years touring both nationally and internationally (Israel, Canada and Europe), giving master-class and concert performances, for which there was overwhelming response and praise. If one defines a common element for these responses, Chloe's genius as a teacher and artist had a very central theme: "The fine art of communication stretched to its zenith proportions." Owen invariably capped off her appearances with an ambitious and stunning song recital, even well into her eighties.

A champion of 20<sup>th</sup>-century American composers, Chloe Owen enjoyed close professional relationships with Ned Rorem, David Diamond, Lee Hoiby and Thomas Pasatieri, among others. Her passion for the American art song led her to found the Chloe Owen American Art Song Vocal Competition sponsored for several years by the National Association of Teachers of Singing, New York City chapter (NATS-NYC). In addition to her activity with NYSTA and NATS, she was actively involved in Professional Women Singers Association and the prestigious American Academy of Teachers of Singing (AATS), among other groups. She taught at Boston University, the Berkshire Music Festival, Tanglewood, the American Institute of Westminster College, the American Institute of Musical Studies (AIMS) in Graz, Austria, and was a Master Teacher for the NATS Intern Program in 1993 and 1995.

Over her long career, Chloe Owen's students have achieved success in opera, oratorio, musical theater, and cabaret. Instrumentalists have also benefited from her amazing technical work regarding breathing and freedom of movement. Her passion for artistic achievement carried over into many areas, including an immense compassion and support for the struggling artist. A woman of short stature, her beauty, personality and dramatic scope expanded her to seemingly Olympic proportions. She tirelessly shared her expertise and enthusiasm with her students, who discovered in her a sympathetic listener to their woes, whether personal, musical, or financial. She shared with all her abundant curiosity in new ideas regarding healthy living, spiritual growth, healing methods, and universal thought. Chloe radiated an open and loving heart, despite producing more than once, in her zeal to bring out the best in a student, anger and even tears. Yet her innate love and respect underlay her sometimes fiery methods. Her natural impetuosity led to occasional ruffled feathers, but her heart and her voice - and a fervent quest to pass along her knowledge to others - lifted all of us up on the wings of music. In later years Chloe's voice studio remained lively, and she was in demand as coach, stage director and a frequent judge of vocal competitions. She demonstrated her incredible vitality, incredible vocal range and technique with several remarkable "birthday concerts" at ages 75, 80 and 85 on both coasts. Her last public appearance was at age 89 in a tiny but flashy role with a small New York opera company.

Chloe Owen died on April 28, 2010 after a long illness. She was 91 years old. She left behind her beloved nephew, Owen Heter, of Las Vegas, Nevada; the hundreds of colleagues, students, friends and listeners whose lives she touched in her ninety-one years as a "force of nature."



Source: eBay [Photo]; Chloe Owen Studio Website; Obituary in New York Times (May 4, 2010); Obituary in Voice Print (October-November 2010, Author: Jill Bosworth)

Contributed by **Teddy Kaufman** (November 2006); **Manfred Krugmann** (Dates, June 2012)

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