

Recognized for her “quicksilver passagework” and “tender lyricism” (*The Washington Post*), yet not afraid to shout, swing her foot onto the piano or don fingerless gloves if the music demands it, pianist Francesca Hurst divides her playing evenly between classical and contemporary music. Classically trained, she accidentally fell into the new music scene in 2013 when she stepped in last minute for a gig with Great Noise Ensemble. At ease with a wide repertoire ranging from J.S. Bach to Caroline Shaw, and with a passion for performing the music of living women composers, she makes sense of the music regardless of style and period. Dedicated to connecting with the audience, Francesca enjoys giving salon concerts in smaller venues. During the pandemic, she created the 100-day online series [Daily Dose of Piano](#), which featured music from the Baroque to today, including 14 premieres.

Francesca has appeared as a solo and collaborative guest artist at many new music festivals, most recently as a fellow in the Contemporary Ensemble at the 2021 Atlantic Music Festival, where they premiered over 50 works in 6 weeks. She has also appeared in the Bang on a Can Music Marathon, New Music Gathering, New Music DC, New Music Delaware, Livewire, Charlotte New Music Festival, the Andriessen 75 Festival, and New Voices @CUA. She has performed music of composers including Martin Bresnick, Pierre Jalbert, Aaron Jay Kernis, Marc Mellits, and George Crumb, and has premiered several works, including pieces by Jennifer Margaret Barker, Rahilia Hasanova, Armando Bayolo, Faye Chiao, and others.

Francesca was a member of Great Noise Ensemble for ten years, and loved the feeling and camaraderie of performing in a large group. Other collaborations have included playing with the United States Army Band “Pershing’s Own”, Newprism Ensemble, and Karen Reedy Dance. She enjoyed a yearlong residency with the Polaris Piano Trio in 2019, a group dedicated to performing works by women and composers of African descent, and gave several concerts in 2022 with flutist Robert Cart.

A native of Washington, DC, Dr. Hurst was recently named to the Virginia Commission for the Arts’ Performing Artists Touring Roster. Francesca has performed nationally at such venues as the Kennedy Center, the National Gallery of Art, and the National Museum of Women in the Arts in Washington, DC, Brookfield Place in New York, and internationally at the American Cathedral in Paris, the Young Soloists Festival in Cascais, Portugal, Villa Esposito in Salerno, Italy, and Teatro della Concordia in Monte Castello di Vibio, Italy, the “Smallest Theater in the World”. Half-Italian and fluent in Italian, Francesca travels to Italy yearly to visit family and friends. In 2017 she gave a solo recital at San Giorgio Church in Salerno, where most of her Italian family heard her perform live for the first time. That concert remains one of her most meaningful performance experiences.

An effective and innovative teacher, Francesca creates an inclusive and positive learning atmosphere where students feel welcomed, valued, and respected. She is a Lecturer of Piano at The Catholic University of America. Outside of CUA, she maintains a thriving private piano studio in northern Virginia, and she also taught for several years at Trinity Washington University. She is a member of the Music Teachers National Association, the College Music Society, the Musicians Club of Women, and MusicLink Foundation, and is often invited to judge competitions and give master classes. Francesca holds a DMA and MM in Piano Performance from The Catholic University of America, as well as a BFA in Piano and a BA in Italian from Tulane University.