

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 Bach to JacobTV, she makes sense of the music regardless of style and period. Passionate about connecting with the audience, Francesca enjoys giving salon concerts in smaller venues. During the pandemic, when all in-person concerts were canceled, she created the online series [Daily Dose of Piano](#), where she recorded and shared a different piano piece each day for 100 days. The series featured music from the Baroque to today, including 14 premieres, some written during the pandemic.

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 4, 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.

Until 2013, the majority of Francesca’s performance experience was either solo or in small chamber ensembles. Becoming a member of Great Noise Ensemble was a radical and welcome addition to her performing life, and she found that she loved the feeling and camaraderie of performing in a large group. Other collaborations have included the United States Army Band “Pershing’s Own”, Newprism Ensemble, and Karen Reedy Dance. She continues playing solo piano and chamber music, and enjoyed collaborating with the Polaris Piano Trio in 2019, a group dedicated to performing works by women and composers of African descent.

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 Sunderman Conservatory in Pennsylvania, and internationally at the Young Soloists Festival in 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.

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. She is on the piano faculty at Catholic University and served for nine years as an adjunct music and piano professor at Trinity Washington University. Her teachers have included Dr. Ivo Kaltchev, Faina Lushtak, Giuseppe Tanzini and Maryen Herrett. Outside of university teaching, she maintains a thriving private piano studio, and is a member of the Northern Virginia Music Teachers Association, the College Music Society, and Music Teachers National Association. She recently became an MTNA Nationally Certified Teacher of Music, and often judges competitions and teaches master classes.