

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.

Francesca has appeared as a solo and collaborative guest artist at many new music festivals, including the Bang on a Can Music Marathon, New Music Gathering, New Music Delaware, Livewire 4, Charlotte New Music Festival, the Andriessen 75 Festival, and New Voices @CUA. She has performed music of composers including Aaron Jay Kernis, Marc Mellits, and George Crumb, and has premiered several works, including two solo piano pieces by Scottish-American composer Jennifer Margaret Barker. Francesca is currently commissioning another solo piano work by Barker and plans to record and premiere the work in 2019.

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 has performances planned for 2019 with the Polaris Piano Trio and Duo Anima with cellist Natalie Spehar.

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 an adjunct professor at Catholic University and served for nine years on the adjunct faculty of 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, Music Teachers National Association and the College Music Society. As someone known in the community, Francesca often judges competitions and teaches master classes.