

Clarice Assad

“she energetically bends music to her will and reshapes it with fascinating results.” –
Jazz Improv Magazine

2022 Long Biography

A powerful communicator renowned for her musical scope and versatility, Brazilian-American Clarice Assad is a significant artistic voice in the classical, world music, pop, and jazz genres. The Grammy Award–nominated composer, celebrated pianist, inventive vocalist, and educator is acclaimed for her evocative colors, rich textures, and diverse stylistic range. With her talent sought-after by artists and organizations worldwide, the polyglot musician continues to attract new audiences both onstage and off.

What motivates Clarice Assad? What drives her passion and creativity? Writing and playing music that inspires and encourages audiences’ imaginations to break free of often self-imposed constraints is just the beginning. She endeavors to harness the incredible and intangible power of music to connect people and transform lives through original works, commissions, and education programs that give voice to everything from the impact of climate change on the natural world to issues of social justice, gender equity, and the empowerment of young voices.

Assad also engages audiences directly to immerse themselves in the music. Her 2019 work, *É Gol!*, which was inspired by the legendary female Brazilian soccer player Marta Vieira da Silva, is scored for full orchestra and features active participation by audience members singing, performing body percussion movements, and making sound effects. This work continues her explorations with expanding the sonic palette of the voice, both acoustically and through electronic means. *Classical Voice North America* praises her, saying, “In other hands, the electronically altered sounds might be dismissed as a gimmick, but Assad is like one of those cooks who can turn any four random foodstuffs into a feast.”

She takes this immersive experience outside of the concert hall with the innovative and accessible *VOXploration*, which she created in 2015. The award-winning education program offers a creative, fun, and accessible approach to music education through meaningful, interactive experiences. In an era where digital interaction is part of the daily routine, the class encourages participants to utilize their bodies and voices as musical instruments in spontaneous music creation, songwriting, and improvisation. It has been carefully curated to work equally well with participants of any age or musical background and has been presented around the world.

Clarice Assad’s 2022–2023 season includes commissions by the Camerata Pacifica, Music Accord, the League of American Orchestras, the Oregon Symphony, Saint Paul Chamber Orchestra, LA Phil, Chamber Music America, the Fry Street Quartet, and the Philadelphia Orchestra. Educational residencies include an intense workshop and compositional program at the Austin Classical Guitar Foundation, Levine Music in Washington, DC, and the Massachusetts Institute of Technology.

Her latest release of the album *Archetypes*, performed with her father Sérgio Assad and Chicago-based ensemble Third Coast Percussion, received 2022 Grammy nominations in the Best Chamber Music/Small Ensemble Performance and Best Contemporary Classical Composition categories. The collaboratively written program conjures a dozen universal archetypes through a mélange of imaginative chamber music and Latin jazz rhythms. The artists resume their concert tour in 2022.

Assad goes behind the music with her *Voxploration* podcast. Begun in September 2020, it offers a series of interviews with astonishing singers from around the world who share their musical expertise, tips, techniques, and unique styles. Episodes explore the vibrant worlds of beatbox and freestyle hip hop, as well as the improvisational systems of jazz, art song, maqam, and South Carnatic music, and much more.

The prolific composer has more than 70 works to her credit, including numerous commissions for Carnegie Hall, the Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center, Orquestra Sinfônica de São Paulo, Chicago Sinfonietta, San Jose Chamber Orchestra, General Electric, Sybarite5, Metropolis ensemble, the Bravo! Vail Music Festival, and the La Jolla Music Festival, to name a few.

Her work commissioned by Aquarelle Guitar Quartet, *Danças Nativas*, was nominated for a Latin Grammy for best contemporary composition in 2009. She was commissioned by Albany Symphony in 2019 to help a group of teenage girls from Girls' Inc. compose a pop piece based on Sojourner Truth's speech "Ain't I a Woman." Assad recently wrote the soundtrack to *Devoti Tutti*, a documentary by Bernadette Wegenstein about Catania, Italy's celebration of Saint Agatha, and is composing the music for a ballet by award-winning choreographer Shannon Alvis.

Her compositions have been recorded by some of the most prominent names in classical music, including percussionist Dame Evelyn Glennie, cellist Yo-Yo Ma, violinist Nadja Salerno-Sonnenberg, and oboist Liang Wang. Assad's music has been performed by Philadelphia Orchestra, Tokyo Symphony, Queensland Symphony, and the Orquestra Sinfônica de São Paulo, among others. She has served as a composer-in-residence for the Albany Symphony, the Cabrillo Festival of Contemporary Music, New Century Chamber Orchestra, and the Boston Landmarks Orchestra. Her works are published in France (Editions Lemoine), Germany (Trekel), Brazil (Criadores do Brasil), and in the U.S. by Virtual Artists Collective Publishing (VACP), a publishing company she co-founded with poet and philosopher Steve Schroeder.

As a performer, Assad has shared the stage with Bobby McFerrin, Anat Cohen, Nadia Sirota, Paquito D'Rivera, Tom Harrell, Marilyn Mazur, and Mike Marshall, among other outstanding musicians. She has appeared at internationally renowned venues and festivals including The Netherlands' Concertgebouw, Carnegie Hall, Belgium's Le Palais des Beaux-Arts, Le Casino de Paris, Jazz at Lincoln Center, and the Caramoor International Jazz Festival.

The popular recording artist has released seven solo albums and appeared on or had her works performed on another 34. Her music is represented on Cedille Records, SONY Masterworks, Nonesuch, Adventure Music, Edge, Telarc, NSS Music, GHA, and CHANDOS.

Her *VOXploration* education program has received grants and awards from Brazilian foundations such as CAIXA CULTURAL and SESC, as well as American grants from New Music USA and the McKnight Foundation. Assad has given master classes, residencies, and workshops throughout the United States, Europe, and the Middle East, including at the Juilliard School of Music, the Aarhus Conservatory of Music, the University of Michigan, the University of Texas, and the Royal Conservatory of Brussels.

Born in Rio de Janeiro, Clarice Assad has lived in Brazil, France, and the United States. She is fluent in Portuguese, French, and English, and sings in all three languages, as well as Spanish and Italian. One of the most widely performed Brazilian concert music composers of her generation, she is the recipient of numerous honors and awards, including an Aaron Copland Award, several ASCAP awards in composition, a Morton Gould Young Composer Award, the Van Lier Fellowship, the Franklin Honor Society Award, the Samuel Ostrowsky Humanities Award, the New Music Alive Partnership program by the League of American Orchestras, and a McKnight Visiting Composer Award. Assad holds a Bachelor of Music degree from Chicago's Roosevelt University, and a Master of Music degree from The University of Michigan School of Music, where she studied with Michael Daugherty, Susan Botti, and Evan Chambers.