

Clarice Assad

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

– Jazz Improv Magazine

2026 Biography

Grammy Award–nominated composer, pianist, vocalist, and educator Clarice Assad is one of the most compelling and versatile creative voices in contemporary music. Born in Rio de Janeiro and fluent in five languages, the Brazilian-American artist—now based in Chicago—is celebrated for her evocative colors, rich textures, and fearless range across classical, world, jazz, and pop idioms.

In February 2026, the American Academy of Arts and Letters awarded Assad the **Andrew Imbrie Award in Music**, recognizing a mid-career composer of demonstrated artistic merit. The previous year, she received the **2025 Meier Achievement Award** from the Helen Coburn Meier and Tim Meier Charitable Foundation for the Arts, honoring Chicago-area artists who push the artistic envelope. That same month, she delivered the Kageyama-Hunt Global Speaker Series address at Belmont Hill School, a distinguished lecture series dedicated to global citizenship. In March 2026, her new string quartet work *NEXUS* received its New York premiere at Carnegie Hall’s Zankel Hall, performed by the Takács Quartet. Praised by the *New York Classical Review* and featured in *The Strad* under the headline “Let’s Clarice It Up,” the work guides four players through a dramatic arc of individuality, collision, and dissolution—asking, through music and choreography, what it truly means to play as one.

With more than 130 works to her credit, Assad has received commissions from Carnegie Hall, the Philadelphia Orchestra, the LA Philharmonic, the Saint Paul Chamber Orchestra, and many others. Her music has been recorded by cellist Yo-Yo Ma, percussionist Dame Evelyn Glennie, and violinist Nadja Salerno-Sonnenberg, and released on Cedille Records, SONY Masterworks, and Nonesuch. Her album *Archetypes*—recorded with her father, guitarist Sérgio Assad, and Third Coast Percussion—earned two Grammy nominations in 2022 for Best Chamber Music/Small Ensemble Performance and Best Contemporary Classical Composition.

She is currently composer-in-residence with the Allentown Symphony (2023–2027) and the Albany Symphony (2024–27), and has previously held residencies at the Cabrillo Festival of Contemporary Music, New Century Chamber Orchestra, and the Boston Landmarks Orchestra. Her music consistently invites audiences inside it: her orchestral work *É Gol!*, inspired by Brazilian soccer legend Marta Vieira da Silva, has full audiences singing, performing body percussion, and making sound effects—what Classical Voice North America called the work of someone “like one of those cooks who can turn any four random foodstuffs into a feast.”

As a performer, she has appeared at Carnegie Hall, the Concertgebouw, Jazz at Lincoln Center, and Le Casino de Paris, sharing stages with Bobby McFerrin, Paquito D’Rivera, and Anat Cohen. Through her VOXploration education series—presented worldwide at institutions including the Juilliard School, the Royal Conservatory of Brussels, and the

University of Michigan, and supported by New Music USA and the McKnight Foundation—she brings music creation and improvisation to participants of all ages and backgrounds.

Assad holds a Bachelor of Music from Roosevelt University in Chicago and a Master of Music from the University of Michigan. Her many honors include the Andrew Imbrie Award (American Academy of Arts and Letters), the Meier Achievement Award, the Aaron Copland Award, a Morton Gould Young Composer Award, a McKnight Visiting Composer Award, the Van Lier Fellowship, and multiple ASCAP composition awards.