

Biography: Nicole Brancato

Nicole Brancato makes music to unlock wonder. Fascinated with contemporary expressions of our shared human experience, the NYC-based pianist merges curation, composition, and performance in collaborations across the arts.

Described as “brilliant” and an “immense talent” (*New York Magazine* and *Connect Savannah*), Nicole is “redefining the very notion of classical music” (*Atención San Miguel*). Her credits range from the Guggenheim Museum (NYC), Rai Italia, and the Banff Centre (Canada) to Lincoln Center, Bellas Artes (Mexico), and Brooklyn's underground warehouse scene.

Over the past decade, Nicole has curated more than 100 productions featuring over 200 new works and commissions. Her work has earned more than 50 international awards, honors, and grants, including the New York Foundation for the Arts (2024, 2022), National Sawdust's Hildegard Commission (2022), and the New York State Council on the Arts (2026, 2024). She was a 2024 recipient of the IPaT/GTRI Research & Engagement Grant for *Democratizing Creative Agency through Interactive Technologies and Music Education*, a project bridging engineering and music.

Commissioned by Pure.Art Circle (Italy, 2024), Nicole created *Infinitesimal*, a “desperately moving and intimate” (*Harmonious World*) chamber opera, in partnership with baritone/theater artist Jeremy Weiss. A genre-shattering work for voice, piano, and electronics, *Infinitesimal* interweaves memoir with cutting-edge research on near-death experiences to illuminate what connects us all. Directed by Kevin Newbury (Metropolitan Opera, San Francisco Opera) and hailed as “moving and sensitively crafted” (*Art Bath NYC*), *Infinitesimal* has been presented at the Conservatoire de Pantin (Paris), World Heart Beat Theatre (London), and Bolzano Art Weeks (Italy), and was in residence at Indiana University's Jacobs School of Music.

Her multimedia commissioning project *The Illustrated Pianist* — featured in *The San Francisco Chronicle* and KALW Open Air — honors the centenary of the science fiction author Ray Bradbury. The project has been described as “ingenious,” “mysterious,” and “inspiring,” and featured 24 new commissions by new commissions by the likes of Adam Tandler, Anthony de Mare, and Kathleen Supové, as well as Brancato's own work. Nicole's modern big band project *The Titanics* reimagined chart-topping songs with dozens of guest comedians and actors, including Jackie Hoffman and Justin Vivian Bond. During its residency at the Cutting Room and the Ace Hotel, the big band made special appearances at Joe's Pub and for HBO, and was lauded in *The New Yorker* and *Time Out New York*.

Described as a “piano virtuoso” (*The Daily Gazette*, Saratoga Springs), Nicole approaches performance as a kinetic exchange between collaborators and audience alike. In 2021, she began her partnership with visual artist Douglas Paulson to create *.soundfullness*: a sculptural piano installation that transforms outdoor spaces into places of deep listening, including Socrates Sculpture Park, Make Music New York (headlining artist), and Flux Factory. Her collaborators have also included artist and author Sam Morris in “wait-list-only” performances at actor Alan Cumming's NYC club.

With Duo Extempore, she and bassist Evan Jagels have created cross-disciplinary films and site-specific performances featuring everything from improvisation-based storytelling to amplified plant biorhythms. And at the Guggenheim, Nicole participated in a “night at the museum” multimedia staging of Satie's *Vexations* with Christian Wolff, Philip Corner, David Del Tredici, and Joshua Rifkin — all of whom performed in John Cage's legendary premiere of the work in 1963.

A frequent guest presenter of workshops, master classes, and residencies, Nicole has delivered sessions for the Gesellschaftshaus Magdeburg (Germany); Lunigiana International Music Festival (Italy); Columbia University; and universities across the US. In 2025, she joined the Georgia Institute of Technology Research Institute (GTRI) as Artist in Residence and curriculum specialist, collaborating with researchers to explore new intersections of STEM and arts education.

Nicole was a 2024-2025 Artist in Residence with the New York City Department of Education, curating interdisciplinary critical inquiry projects with public school students over the course of the academic year. Since 2022, she has served as Artistic Director of Seven Hills Chamber Music, curating its acclaimed summer festival of classical and contemporary chamber music, educational programming, and pop-up events in the heart of Virginia.

Nicole holds degrees from CUNY Hunter College, Georgia State University, and Manhattan School of Music. She is a proud Yamaha Artist and a voting member of The Recording Academy.

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