

Shining bright: 22 Rising Stars whose ideas and skills are redefining public media

By **Current Staff** | July 31, 2023



Chris Campbell

Current’s new initiative to shine a spotlight on public media’s up-and-coming talents drew an amazing response. We asked for nominations of Rising Stars — early- to mid-career professionals who are making a difference for public media organizations and audiences. So many of the 238 nominations offered compelling testimonies of talented colleagues who are introducing new ideas, voices and skills to change the ways audiences experience and engage with public media.

These 22 young professionals rose to the top of our evaluation process to be recognized as a Current Rising Star of 2023. Their profiles draw from the nominations submitted by colleagues and each honoree’s responses to a survey about their accomplishments, values and sources of inspiration.

This is Current’s inaugural class of public media Rising Stars — congratulations for your work and achievements. Keep shining bright! — *Karen Everhart*

Brisa Siegel

Host, Classical California

KUSC, Los Angeles and KDFC, San Francisco

In three words: “Charismatic, empathetic, conscientious”



(Photo: Gregory Perez/Classical California)

What colleagues say: Brisa joined Classical California’s first-ever cohort of host trainees almost two years ago after working in the entertainment industry. Her curiosity about music, her knack for engaging her audience and her ability to take, understand and apply notes have boosted her to great success. In her short time on-air, she’s already become a listener favorite.

She is a major force behind the creation of our Nuestra Música streams. Brisa scoured every music library she could find for months to source classical music from across Latin America and the Spanish-speaking world. She also recorded all the voice tracks twice, once in English and once in Spanish, so we could offer a bilingual streaming experience. Far from just providing a simple Spanish translation of English-language content, Brisa worked carefully to observe important nuances within the languages and provided the best possible context for her audiences.

What Brisa says

Proudest moment: The launch of **Nuestra Música** (<https://current.org/2022/11/new-classical-california-stream-brings-latin-influenced-music-to-listeners/>) (“Our Music”), a free on-demand stream of classical music that features music, conductors and composers with influence from Latin America and the Spanish-speaking world. It was created at USC Radio Group by Program Director Kelsey McConnell and produced by Carolina Correa. I host and write scripts in both Spanish and English. Nuestra Música embodies the essence of Classical California’s mission — “To nurture a love of classical music for all.”

How her values align with a career in public media: Growing up in a bicultural family, I’ve learned the importance of bridging worlds and embracing our differences. Working in public media allows me to continue this journey on a larger scale, fostering connection and understanding. Through thought-provoking content, public media becomes a powerful platform for promoting depth and inclusivity, creating spaces where different perspectives are valued. Whether it’s at my family dinner table or behind a microphone, I feel a sense of belonging in spaces that prioritize dialogue and empathy.

Inspired by: As I’ve advanced in my career I’ve found inspiration in my family, my mentors and my colleagues. Their instruction and guidance have led me to an accolade like this! Those who are on my team — their willingness to challenge me, their ability to step outside of themselves, their sense of responsibility, and the integrity and character that they carry in their own lives —are my wells for inspiration.

Advice for other young professionals in public media: Surround yourself with good people with high standards because they’re contagious. Always leave people and places better than you found them. And always call home to check in.



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