



Nicholas McCarthy

Nicholas McCarthy is a concert pianist and motivational speaker whose story of resilience and determination inspires audiences worldwide. Born without his right hand, he became the first one-handed pianist to graduate from the Royal College of Music. Through keynote talks and live performances, he challenges audiences to rethink what is possible.

KEY TOPICS

- Peak performance
- Resilience
- Using negativity and turning it into a positive outcome.
- Collaborative approach to work (drawing from examples working with the top orchestras and conductors)

BIOGRAPHY

Nicholas McCarthy: Inspiring Pianist and Motivational Speaker

[Nicholas McCarthy's](#) journey is a remarkable example of determination, creativity and self-belief. Born in 1989 without his right hand, he did not begin playing the piano seriously until the late age of 14. Despite being discouraged from pursuing a career in music, Nicholas continued to follow his passion and built a career around the piano left hand. His talent and persistence led him to the prestigious **Royal College of Music in London**. When he graduated in July 2012, Nicholas made history as the first one-handed pianist to graduate from the Royal College in its 130-year history. In March 2018, he was awarded honorary membership of the RCM by its then President, HRH The Prince of Wales, now HM King Charles III. For event hosts looking for a Nicholas McCarthy speaker, his story offers a powerful mix of music, humour, honesty and practical insight. His keynote talks explore resilience, inclusion, confidence, creative problem-solving and the mindset needed to turn obstacles into progress.

A Global Music Career with Major Milestones

Nicholas McCarthy has performed at major venues and with major orchestras around the world. One of the defining moments of his career came at the Closing Ceremony of the 2012 Paralympic Games in London, where he performed with the British Paraorchestra alongside Coldplay. The performance reached an audience of 86,000 in the stadium and half a billion viewers worldwide. Since then, Nicholas has continued to build an international career as a concert pianist. *His performances have taken him to major venues including Queen Elizabeth Hall at London's Southbank Centre and the Royal Albert Hall.* His concerts are known not only for their technical skill, but also for the emotional connection he creates with audiences. Nicholas is also a passionate advocate for the left hand alone repertoire. This music has a rich history, including works connected to Paul

Wittgenstein, the pianist who lost his right arm during the First World War and helped expand the repertoire for piano left hand. Through his performance career, Nicholas continues to bring this fascinating part of music history to new audiences.

From Concert Pianist to Motivational Speaker

Alongside his music career, Nicholas McCarthy is a highly sought-after motivational speaker. His speaking engagements draw on his own life, but they are not only about personal adversity. They are about what happens when people are given the chance to create, contribute and pursue excellence in their own way. Nicholas speaks on resilience, peak performance, inclusion, disability, confidence and creative problem-solving. His talks help audiences understand how determination and a different perspective can open up new routes to success. For corporate audiences, his message is clear and memorable. Barriers can be challenged. Negativity can be turned into a positive outcome. Teams can perform better when they value different strengths, build confidence and take a more collaborative approach to work. Nicholas has worked with major organisations including Goldman Sachs, NHS England and Johnson & Johnson. He has also delivered three **TEDx talks**, bringing his story and perspective to audiences around the world.

Media and Broadcasting Presence

Nicholas McCarthy is also a familiar presence across television, radio and cultural programming. He has guest-presented for the BBC Proms and the Leeds International Piano Competition, sharing his knowledge and love of classical music with wider audiences. He also created *Wittgenstein, Zichy & Me* for BBC Radio 3, a programme exploring the stories of one-handed pianists and the left hand repertoire. These media projects show another side of Nicholas's work: his commitment to making classical music more accessible, inclusive and better understood.

A Keynote Speaker with a Unique Perspective

What makes Nicholas so powerful on stage is the combination of story and performance. He can speak to an audience about resilience, then sit at the piano and show them what resilience sounds like. That blend of keynote speaking and live music gives his events a depth that many speakers simply cannot offer. Nicholas brings warmth, wit and honesty to the stage. He does not present success as easy or neat. Instead, he shares the real work behind his career: the doubts, the discipline, the setbacks and the moments that changed everything. His talks are especially well suited to conferences, leadership events, inclusion programmes, after-dinner events and corporate gatherings where audiences need something meaningful, uplifting and genuinely memorable.

Book Nicholas McCarthy to Speak at Your Next Event

Book Nicholas McCarthy as your keynote speaker if you want your audience to leave feeling inspired, challenged and ready to look at their own potential differently. Whether through motivational speaking, live performances or a combination of both, Nicholas brings a rare perspective on resilience, inclusion and peak performance. His story is amazing, but it is his honesty, skill and connection with audiences that make the experience stay with people long after the event. [Contact us](#) today to learn more about booking Nicholas McCarthy for your next event.

WHAT PEOPLE SAY

"It was amazing, the responses throughout the session and afterwards were brilliant. Not only on how you have shown true resilience throughout your life, your persistence and obviously your breathe breathtaking performance - but wonderful for us to see the impact you've made on members of our leadership team."

— Johnson & Johnson

"Nicholas is a fantastic speaker with a unique and inspiring story that resonated with the entire conference. his performance at the piano added something extra which we've never seen from other speakers we've had in the past. was the highlight of the day"

— ITV Studios

"Nicholas is a funny, engaging and deeply moving speaker who managed to capture the entire audience in the palm of his single hand. truly amazing."

— Goldman Sachs