

Transforming the landscape through music creation and performance

Simon Tedeschi

Let me first say that I'd like to pay respect to the traditional custodians of this land upon which we stand.

In about 2008, I was interviewed by my local rag, the *Sydney Morning Herald*. It was the usual gamut of questions – about my childhood, my studies, my prizes, my approach to performing and even my family. The journalist started off innocently enough but I smelt a rat when she started asking really pointed questions. She wanted a sound byte from me and I had learned from bitter experience as a young man not to give it to anybody, especially journos. However, journos do have a way of preying on the intrinsic human need to be understood – a byproduct of narcissism, which most pianists possess in spades. No names mentioned.

So I was in a bad mood. The journo asked the following question: 'How do you feel that you are different from your contemporaries?' I responded with a firecracker: "most classical pianists couldn't improvise a fart in a Hungarian wedding." Not only did that get published, but it also became the headline. To this day, I have never quite lived that experience down. People still come up to me today and ask me what I meant by it.

What did I mean by it? Well, I was being entirely truthful. Under pressure, the truth comes flowing. I felt that what I said about improvisation not only applied to the arts but to humans generally – our capacity for originality and innovation in the classical piano world had somehow been eroded over recent decades and replaced by a kind of conformity, a conservatism, a timidity

that is enormously deleterious to the artistic process itself. And for me, the artistic process is inherently progressive. Key to this progressivism is the act and art of improvisation. The ability to improvise is integral to the future of classical music. And classical pianists are still not putting improvisation over other areas, such as rote learning, technique, and memory. *All* of these facets, however, are positively impacted by improvisation.

Much has been written, studied, analysed and theorised about improvisation – probably by many sitting in this conference. However, in many ways, we veteran classical performers are behind the eight ball compared to everyday students who are versed in Kodály. We've been swallowed up so much by the idea of *doing* music, that we have lost the meaning of *being* music – music as life force, as a conduit for healing, and as a way of bringing cultures together, not further apart.

Just to digress for a minute: about two weeks ago, the ASME conference organisers contacted my manager, Jackie, and asked her to ask me for an abstract for this speech. I had to first log onto Wikipedia to find out what the word 'abstract' meant. Once I had cleared that up, I was faced with another problem.

To be honest, I regularly grow weary of classical music performers speaking on the important topic of music education. It invariably goes like this:

1. We have trained our whole lives
2. We are effectively athletes, just on a smaller muscle group

3. We don't get sponsorship like Ian Thorpe
4. The general public doesn't like us anymore
5. Music education not being a compulsory part of every school curriculum is the culprit
6. Please give us money

I didn't want to go down this path, because there are greater experts than I on the topic of the sad intersection of culture and public policy. Additionally, I didn't want to fall into the trap of coming across as a classical musician immersed in his own cultural echo chamber, deriding society for not appreciating him enough.

So I got thinking.

And I came to improvisation. And Hungarian Weddings. With lots of farts.

Let me just rattle off a few big names for you: Chopin, Liszt, Beethoven, Hummel, Bach (of course), Handel, Clementi, Scarlatti, and Weber – all great improvisers. And I'm not talking about the blues, of course, but rather extemporization – the idea of composition being a living, breathing, dynamic process.

About eight years ago, I was on the TV show *Spicks and Specks*. Also on the panel was Murray from the Wiggles. I was given a challenge – perform 'Hot potato, hot potato' (one of the Wiggles' hits) in as many styles as I could muster. I was not prepared at all, but did my best at appropriating the tune in the styles of Beethoven, Rachmaninoff and Fats Waller. However, it set my mind on a course of thought that has stayed with me for all this time. What is it about classical musicians – and I can account for 90% of my pianistic colleagues here – who steadfastly proclaim: "I cannot improvise!" (Usually with a Russian accent).

Of course, the phrase 'cannot improvise' is one of the biggest furphys of them all. And a cop-out. Like anything, improvisation is a language and a language is a learned process of biofeedback and cultural reinforcement, a way of integrating old ideas but in a new way. If you can talk, you can

improvise. It is clear to me that the still prevailing mood of resistance to classical improvisation in the education of a classical pianist is largely because of a death:

A historical death of one species of musician in order to make way for another. That death took place around the turn of the 20th century. It is the death of the pianist-composer, to make way for the beast of which I am one: the modern concert pianist.

How did this all happen?

In 1828, one of the greatest pianist-composers of the 19th century decided to turn the music world on its head. Clara Schumann performed *without the score*. At around the same time, Liszt did the same thing. And thus was borne the modern virtuoso – the concert pianist who seemed to defy the laws of nature.

Liszt completely changed what was conceivable on a piano and raised the bar for technical feats of wizardry. Liszt was a great pianist-composer, able to improvise 5 part fugues, canons, concert etudes and sinfonias. With the repertoire composed by the men and women like Liszt - great pianist-composers of the late 19th century – came an entirely new level of dexterity and athleticism required on the piano. Slowly but surely, the role of the composer as paramount was eclipsed and the modern virtuoso was born. Cortot, Gieseking, Grainger, Gilels, Horowitz, Arrau, Rubenstein, Backhaus, Kempff, Michelangeli, Barenboim, Pollini, Argerich and more. Of course these men and women were tremendous musicians as well – but there was still an undeniable shift, from musical auteur to musical performer.

The modern virtuoso, encapsulated by Liszt, was a demigod figure who could play the impossible. And somehow, that switch – from composer/pianist to concert pianist – gained something but also lost something. The ability to expound on a motif, to improvise a fugue, and to turn a theme on its head. The performance as a spectacular event became the focus,

rather than the music that was written for it to serve. Physicality trumped spirituality. In my view, pianism began to ride roughshod over music. Classical music as a sport was born, with contestants, judges and rituals. There was vanquishing for the many and redemption for the few, the winners of the international competitions sanctified as archetypical heroes who were so far removed from the pithy realities of the music that they played. The modern concert artist was born. And classical improvisation, in the first half of the 20th century, largely died.

Pianism continues to get better and better every year. I'm now in the rather surreal position where I get to mentor many youngsters as they progress through the hurdles of competitions, repertoire and hopefully, overseas study in the hope of attaining a career. As a judge – and I hate judging – I listen to these kids and let me tell you – I don't ever remember being that good. The sense of control and poise is staggering. But, as with everything, the situation is nuanced. Have the younger generation lost something along the way? The ability to make music as opposed to reproducing it?

I am reminded of the great Romanian pianist Clara Haskil who gave a masterclass about 50 years ago. All of the young pianists were asked to play a movement of a Mozart Sonata. Haskil listened to all the youngsters and then made a remark that has stuck in my mind. She said: 'why has no-one played a slow movement?' The answer is of course obvious and reflects my point that physicality – the musician as soldier or athlete – is now a veritable symbol, down to the flicking of the tails and the triumphalism of the concerto as ritualistic as St. George slaying the dragon. Similarly, Arthur Rubenstein, the great Polish pianist, already said so much about the changing face of art music in the twentieth century when he remarked that prodigies could play faster than him but he could perform a slow movement with more grace and poignancy than any of them.

What has this to do with improvisation, you may ask? I would argue a lot. The overwhelming focus by young pianists on pyrotechnics is at the expense of sound, control and listening but also the act of creation in performance. The sense that even a performance of a work that has been done to death – with no notes changed - can be an improvisation.

When I listen to pianists of the first half of the 20th century – Cortot, Rubenstein, Gilels, Richter, Gulda, Michelangeli and many others – I am aware that even though the age of the pianist-composer had passed, I can usually recognize each pianist by their sound. Cortot is both delicate and brawny. Rubenstein is unashamedly lyrical, the melody always paramount. Gilels, from the Neuhaus school in the Moscow Conservatory, is dark and percussive, like the society from which he came. Gulda is a chameleon and Michaelangi is slick and suave. In my mind, these performers were all improvisers in the sense that they had a broad palette of unique brushstrokes that they employed, and their sound was as unique as their personality. These musicians were not composers but they recalibrated the work through their own unique aesthetic. They played as individuals first. If you haven't heard him, take a listen to the amazing Ukrainian pianist Shura Cherkassky. He's mercurial, eccentric, and even a little odd. But, what a musician. Chopin, Debussy, Scriabin never sounded so alive, filtered through the creative prism of pianist who was a true improviser. You may not like him – but you can't ignore him.

Another symptom of our post-Lisztian age – and dangerous for classical improvisation - is the pursuit of technique, as if technique is a definable, tangible 'thing' that exists independently and must be drawn upon in order to 'interpret' properly. Technique, if regarded as a separate entity to musicality, like with other forms of art, reduces creative pursuit to a functional endeavor and dilutes its meaning to a sum of its parts. Perhaps my favourite European pianist during

the 1950s was the German Walter Gieseking who made a remark that has forever been imprinted on my psyche. He said something along the lines of 'why do students these days talk about technique as if it is a separate thing? Technique and music *are* the same thing. The only difference is that technique is the physical manifestation of that thing.' When the great man uttered those words, it crystallized for me everything that was wrong with and needed to be remedied with the way art is approached as a cultural instrument. The reduction of technique to a single cell organism is as banal as 'improvisation' being a synonym for 'making stuff up.' Technique and interpretation and improvisation in my mind are all words for the same thing, novel situations that call for the assimilation of existing knowledge but in a different way. Sure, labels are important because language needs to mean *something* – but at the same time, we cannot be constricted by language if it defuses the artistic process, and language is a very unwieldy instrument when we are talking about universal questions raised by Bach, Beethoven, Mozart and Brahms.

Now for the good news. Thankfully, things are in part looking up for classical music – and that's thanks to the extremely likely suspect – Jazz. In the first half of the 20th century, Jazz was undertaking a very different journey to classical music – improvisation was constantly setting trends, then being broken and reworked by the trendsetters. Paradigms were being changed every year. It is indeed possible to listen to recordings from this period and notice motivic shifts and modulations, like evolution is fast forward. Artists like Oscar Peterson raised the bar not only for jazzers but also for classical musicians in terms of physical prowess. Improvisers like Ornette Coleman and Cecil Taylor brought back jazz to its folk roots by eliminating formal 'structure' and improvising in a free fashion.

Luminaries like Miles Davis and Bill Evans truly turned jazz from a popular music into an art music, turning improvisation – whilst still

bluesy – into an inward looking exploration of harmonic and tonal possibilities, in a sense giving jazz a classical sensibility and aesthetic. Then along came Gunther Schuller and turned this whole tired classical-jazz impasse on its head. 3rd stream was born, a synthesis of jazz aesthetics but classical language. For decades now, it has been a given that a truly great jazz player must have a physical command of the instrument that is equal to his or her classical counterpart. Jazz pianists in the last twenty years continue to show this trend of being able to physically execute exactly what they hear at the piano, whether it's Monty Alexander, Brad Mehldau, or even more recent players – Aaron Goldberg or Aaron Parks.

The emergence of the 3rd stream movement at New England Conservatory in the 1970s then merged into a stream called 'contemporary improvisation.' I lived in Boston for 6 years until a few years ago, and the future of classical music rests with these young musicians. The world is now graced with classically trained pianists such as Brazil's Gabriela Montero, whose recital trademark is to improvise in the styles of Beethoven, or Chopin, or Debussy. The Norwegian violinist Pekka Kuisto is another one, who is truly both a classicist and an improviser (as well as a great jazzer!) Australian pianist Lisa Moore, currently living in New York, is one of the musicians at the forefront of this amazing movement. Michael Kieran Harvey, a resident in Tasmania, fills me with hope that classical music's future is as exciting as his performances.

Indeed, in New York, it is almost *de rigeur* that a musician must be equally conversant playing in a jazz bar as in a concert hall, and must be 'cool.' However, this is not what I am talking about. This postmodern trend of being cool, I would submit, is more of the Kim Kardashian factor that has pervaded every single stratum of society and field of learning – the need to create a niche for oneself in an overcrowded market by superimposing an identity as a marketable tool that can draw you out from the crowd. Rather,

I believe that classical music can and should retain its elite quality but also return to its roots of improvising in the classical language, not as a gimmick but as a core feature of learning about the capabilities of one's instrument.

But there's even more good news, in the form of the 'historically informed' music practices as spearheaded by Nicholas Harnoncourt and Gustav Leonhardt. 70 years old now, their work has caused a veritable avalanche in ensembles around the world that feel compelled to play Medieval, Renaissance, Baroque, classical and even romantic music on instruments that are appropriate and contemporaneous for the age in which the music was written. And they improvise! Because Improvisation simply makes sense on these instruments. For instance, to perform Mozart on a 1760 Mnculty almost invites the performer to experiment with his or her own sounds in the style of a Mozart Fantasia. There is something so delightfully un-exhibitionistic about the sounds of historical pianos. It's almost as if they are less top heavy than a mass produced Hamburg Steinway – like flying a Cessna instead of a 747, (even if it's just into Bankstown airport). The temperament is different, so different intervals are darker and some are lighter, so improvisation seems like a natural progression. Even playing on a more recent innovation, such as a Ravel era *Erard*, brings music into a whole new light for me.

For me, one of the greatest classical pianists of the 20th century was Friedrich Gulda. Gulda, one of the greatest exponents of Beethoven, Mozart and Schubert, was unique in a number of ways. Gulda himself was a great fortepianist – and by fortepiano I mean precursor to the modern concert grand – and was influenced deeply by fellow Austrians Harnoncourt and Leonhardt. But Gulda was more than a follower of exciting trends – he was also a visionary. Teaming up with landmark world music and jazz genius Joe Zawinul from Weather Report, Gulda decided to play jazz. Long before Nigel Kennedy's mullet,

Friedrich Gulda was the real genre twister. Go to YouTube and search for 'Friedrich Gulda' and first watch him play Beethoven. Then search for 'Friedrich Gulda and Joe Zawinul'. These two Austrians improvise with a joy and abandon that still resounds in my ears. Gulda was also a composer and created unusual and challenging works such as the 'Variations on a theme by Jim Morrison' (from *The Doors*). It's a quirky, unusual piece in which the classical pianist is required to improvise over the original song's harmonies. I myself performed it in a solo recital in Sydney in 2007. Half the crowd hated it, but that's fine with me. The fact is that I had exposed them to new sounds and challenged their preconceptions – and that's my job. Using the medium of improvisation to take them to new places and to question everything that they hear, see, and feel.

You may have guessed by now that I love improv. Researching for this speech was a guilty pleasure from the first moment. I read about Keith Jarrett and Friedrich Gulda and scales on the Indonesian Gamelan and then, you know how it works – you kinda get distracted and start reading about time dilation and aphids and words like 'twerking'. But as often happens, hidden messages seep their way through to your conscious mind.

I got to reading about Australia as a nation and how improvisation has been integral to our success as one of the most prosperous nations on earth. And I'm not just talking financially. Great strides culturally are borne out of necessity. For Australia, the problem has always been the tyranny of distance. I know this from painful experience having spent months of my life on United Airlines Jets, sweltering like a hog, flying over the Pacific. As a result, we Aussies always had to improvise in order to be competitive. But improv is more than a spark of inspiration. The Aboriginal Dreamtime tradition, extending back 40,000 years and possibly more, features some of the most extraordinary improvisation in human history. Aboriginal artwork is so much more than

a bunch of people sitting around a campfire drawing what they see. It's an instruction manual for life, a way of synthesizing information in response to external stimuli. It's what Mozart would do in 1780 and Louis Armstrong would do in 1920. And it's still what we classical pianists don't do enough of. We need to revitalize piano pedagogy, to be less about international competitions and more about the reason we got into music in the first place – it's tactile, synapse-altering capacity to infiltrate our personhood and evolve us as a species.

I believe that the death of the pianist-composer is the primarily culprit in the current comatose of classical improvisation in Australia. But the Internet has also played a part in recalibrating our brains away from improvisation. Improvisation at its most elemental form is the ability to solve novel challenges with existing information and Google has tied that problem up to a tee. With its labyrinthine tentacles across every data centre and microchip in the world, Google has effectively nailed the coffin of improvisation shut. No longer do we have to find where a café is – Google will tell us. No longer do we have to find a phone number – Google will find it for us. No longer do we actually have to do preparation before giving a keynote speech – Google will do it for us.

As humans, we have become automatons, on one hand so directly connected with our own bodies and its every pang of dissatisfaction but on the other we have never been so insolently lazy, so disconnected from each other on a primal, spiritual, vital level – and that can only be achieved through life practiced in its most functional, sensual, un-reductionist form – the solving of problems – otherwise known as improvisation.

The argument that the Internet has dumbed us down is partially an obtuse one, because it is the most valuable and dynamic source of information ever compiled in human history. It's almost a chestnut now to say that the internet

has made us stupid,' because it's only half the story. I found it to be incredibly useful for this speech, for instance, but I still treated it as I would a P plate driver – with healthy caution. In terms of accessing information that is pertinent, authoritative and current, I believe the Internet to be *both* a Picasso painting and scrawl on a toilet wall – and in that sense it is unique.

It was Picasso who said that 'all children are artists. The problem is how to remain an artist once he grows up.' (Presumably Picasso also meant *she* as well. One would hope). Picasso is an example of an artist who exemplifies what improvisation is all about: thought patterns, symbols and cultural milieus being appropriated through the prism of *doing*. It is intuition actualized. Another is the film maker David Lynch, who for me is as close as possible to achieving the visual language of dreams – beyond human made constructs such as morality, religion, high art, low art, race, gender and sexual preference. Another is one of our keynote speakers Dr. Ahmad Naser Sarmast, who uses improvisation to problem solve and change lives in extraordinary circumstances. It is the very artists who are able to use improvisation to transcend language itself – with all its hang-ups – that I would argue release the true and penultimate value of improvisation: the liberation of the human unconscious.

Much has been written about the unconscious. It has been described as a monster, an animal, a repository of information, a tabula rasa (or blank slate) and in Eastern cultures, as precisely the opposite – when someone is 'unconscious' they are actually not alive to the moment. They are simply being reactive, in the way that a man having a meltdown during a traffic jam is. To me, this cultural dichotomy is not mutually exclusive. When I improvise, I am channeling desires that are both reactive and intuitive. When Freud wrote about the unconscious mind, in my mind he was both right and wrong. For a start, the act of interpretation in the psychoanalytic theory of personality uses language – and again, we come

back to language being a completely insufficient tool to describe the language of improvisation, which is the unconscious mind. When Freud famously analyzed once of his patients, nicknamed the ‘Wolf Man,’ he used deductive reasoning in the much the same way that Sherlock Holmes did when he said that ‘It is an old maxim of mine that when you have excluded the impossible, whatever remains, however improbable, must be the truth.’

While exciting, unlocking the human mind and improvisatory potential cannot be reduced to reductive reasoning, as I was pointing out in relation to technique. The unconscious does have logic, but it is a logic that is unconscious! It is partially inherited, influenced heavily by our upbringing and is always *on*. When David Lynch directs a movie, he sits down with Angelo Badalamenti – I think perhaps the greatest film composer of all – and closes his eyes. ‘Start playing,’ he says. After a while Badalamenti might play a certain chord or chord progression, and Lynch says ‘That’s it!’ And I can hear exactly what Lynch is hearing. Can I apply a label to it? No. Can I describe it? Well, I can try but it doesn’t even come close. Can I understand it? Yes. Particularly when I am asleep and dreaming. Lynch encapsulated the process and power of improvisation when he described the reaction a student had to one of his paintings. She was standing there with a baffled look in her eyes and said glumly ‘I don’t understand.’ Lynch said ‘yes you do. Your eyes are moving.’

Improvisation is many things but primarily it is about liberating the unconscious mind. The unconscious mind, both empty and full, is perfect for improvisation because it has both intuition and cognition. However, like with any other force, the unconscious mind must be fed. It was the great Chilean pianist Claudio Arrau who remarked that therapy should be essential for any musician in order to liberate the unconscious. (Personally, I know a lot of musicians who seriously need therapy). I go even further and argue that therapy

is essential for every human being in order to be able to improvise and I use improvise in the widest possible term – the ability to cope with life stressors by engineering solutions. Written on the Temple of Apollo at Delphi is the phrase ‘know thyself.’ Could there be any more important maxim than this? I believe it is incumbent on every musician – performing or otherwise – to know themselves. Not just as musicians, but as complex beings with depth, with the capacity to use music to transform.

Therapy is, in my mind, an invaluable tool. It allows one’s mind to expand, wounds to heal and also, if you have the right therapist, question every tenet of the culture from which one is moulded. A good therapist is not like Freud, applying deductive reasoning to make interpretations. Like with a great improvisation, therapy is all about the spaces in between the words or notes. A glance here, a tiny nod there – similar to what jazz improvisers call ‘ghost notes,’ where the implication of a note is enough to suggest that that note has actually happened.

The ability to improvise – or draw on the power of one’s unconscious mind – is also a major tool in improving one’s capacity to memorize music. If I am performing Beethoven’s Sonata op. 110 and I am halfway through the big fugue and I have a memory lapse – thank goodness this has never actually happened to me – I can gradually claw my way back using my unconscious that has been trained to assimilate previously imparted information. Similarly, if I am playing a jazz solo and I lose the form – and this happens all the time – I will use my ear and my ear will rely on the repository of unconscious intelligence that I know I have at my disposal.

One of my colleagues, who is one of Sydney’s best jazz guitarists, believes that jazz improvisation is one of the most deeply redemptive processes in humankind. The way a person improvises is so key to his or her personality, mental state, fixations and obsessions. In the last few weeks, I finished

recording a CD called *Gershwin Take 2*, which is in turn a follow up to *Gershwin and Me*. In it, I recorded 'let's call the whole thing off' with the great James Morrison, in which we both take a solo. I noticed that my sense of swing, the 'groove' if you will, seemed somehow too much 'on top' of the beat during my solo. Somehow to me, it felt frenetic and had a bit too much nervous energy for my liking. Sure, that's partly down my classical training but also it reflected so much about my mind at the time. Improvisation is both so liberating and so confronting because of the emotional nakedness that ensues.

The call to improvise effects a classical chamber musician, a concerto soloist and a jazzier. As a chamber musician, millions of tiny decisions need to be made in the spur of the moment. What happens if the clarinetist plays his entry too fast? What happens if the bassist's string snaps? As a concerto soloist, I need to improvise constantly. What happens if the conductor brings the winds in too early? As a jazzier, a horn player may play a line. I don't want to get in his 'real estate'! I also need to make him sound good. Will I instinctively know what to do? If I did the wrong thing last time, will I remember what I did – and that I should do differently this time? My point is as before – that the need to improvise impacts upon all musicians, not just jazz players, and certainly not just in terms of 'ad libbing'. Thinking in this way – creatively, expansively – will naturally encourage classical musicians to want to understand more about their instruments, the tonal possibilities and the extended techniques. It will prepare them to be more than just virtuosi, but innovators.

Improvisation has the ability to transfer a sense of 'knowing' from mind to body. In line with my previous comments about technique, the modern era interprets the word 'knowing' in an intellectual sense, as if the mind is somehow divorced or detached from our body. When we improvise and improve at the process of improvisation, 'knowing' becomes a somatic

experience that engages a whole-body intelligence. Improvisation, accordingly, has the ability to engage all human beings in all fields, and transition all the cultural baggage in the word 'intelligence' from a purely concrete one into an intelligence that encompasses imagination, feelings, spirit, intuition and our connection with the planet. It will allow us to plunge knowingly into the unknown, confront our fears (not just musical) and allow us to access the foundry of information that we are born with, in every cell of our bodies. We can take classical music back to its roots – the mythic, symbolic, pre-verbal, totemic, ritualistic. When we encourage music students of all kinds to surrender to the unknown and willingly suspend their disbelief – we can truly tap into a level of experience and connectedness that will be just a small part of our evolution into something greater than party politics, xenophobia and bigotry.

Well, I have strict instructions from Matthew Irving not go over an hour – and I would hate to be in breach of some kind of contractual obligation.

I'll just leave you with a story.

In 1986, I was aged 5 and in year 1 at a tiny public school on the north shore of Sydney. I walked into the assembly hall one day and there was a boy called Richard. He was tiny, and coiled over. That was because he had cerebral palsy. He was sitting there, at the school piano, improvising. It was rough as guts – I remember that – but it had an overpowering effect on me that has never gone away. Music got me by the throat that day and never let go. That same week, I nagged my mother for piano lessons (in the drastic reverse of what normally happens) and I started with the local piano teacher a few days later.

My point is this: my life with music is thanks to a young boy doodling on the piano, expressing his unconscious. Possibly from his perspective he was only helping himself – but I have to thank him not just for my life with music, but

for my life. Improvisation has the capacity to do that – to communicate in a way that words cannot. For classical musicians, we need to look at improvisation in a new way. Not as something that most of us did 150 years ago – but something that is integral to our future in an era where art music is more and more relegated to the fringes of society.

It has been a tremendous pleasure to speak with you today and I feel truly humbled to be

in the presence of so many amazing people. Together, we can work to bring improvisation back to where it belongs – to the forefront of classical music. In doing so, we will both move forward in terms of progression and backwards in terms of harnessing the true fundament of classical music – the music itself.

Thank you.

Simon Tedeschi is quite often described by respected critics and musical peers as one of the finest artists in the world making the young pianist's mark on music both undeniable and admirable. Renowned especially for championing non standard repertoire, Tedeschi enjoys a full international performing career.