



David Garrett interview

Posted: 10 Apr 2009

Hong Kong is one of your biggest markets. Why?

Hong Kong was the first market where I saw things work out in a big way. It was where I felt the whole crossover project (the 2006 album *Virtuoso*) worked. It was the first record where I wrote my own stuff, [and] when you do such a thing you don't know how people will react to the material. Hong Kong was the first place where I got very, very positive feedback, and because of that Germany opened up for me.

You're just 27 years old but have performed in public countless times since your talents were recognised as a child. Does any concert stand out as the best?

I've performed a couple of thousand times. There are so many memorable experiences. I once played in front of 40,000 people in Hyde Park, and last year I did a football stadium opening in Germany for 10,000 people. It was a great experience.

What are the ingredients for a memorable performance?

In all these experiences, the people make a difference. I worked with [renowned violinist Yehudi] Menuhin when I was a child and that was special. Every concert has something you learn, either from the conductor, the orchestra or about yourself.

Your newest album *Encore* features diverse works ranging from Brahms' *Hungarian Dance No. 5* to AC/DC's *Thunderstruck*. Why mix it up?

I just listened to a lot of music directions. I've always enjoyed using elements of classical and rock. It's always been about finding your own taste. I think it's an amazing opportunity to have these days, to do these kinds of projects that attract new audiences. At the end, I'm a core classical performer. It's about 70-80 per cent of my repertoire. But it's important to draw a younger audience, give them something they can relate to. That's the main idea behind the crossover.

As Germany's best-selling artist, there must be significant demands on you. How do you make enough time to keep growing as a musician?

That's a very difficult question. The most important thing is to start from scratch every morning. Never play something the same as you played last night, always search for a better interpretation, always grow as a musician... every morning look at stuff in a new way and never rely on something you did last night, even if it was a success. That's the key.

You've had the privilege of playing with musical giants like Yehudi Menuhin and Itzhak Perlman. From your performances and interviews, it's clear that you value an expressive and individualised style. Why is this important to you?

It makes a difference. The biggest problem these days in music is there's a great level of playing technically, probably the highest level ever, but a lot of people sound alike. I always remember Itzhak Perlman told me that it has to be different; you have to find your own voice. If you listen to singers, you might like them or not, but all the top vocalists have their unique talent which you have to strive for as a violinist. All of them – Menuhin, Perlman, Heifetz – have their own voice. Too many try to copy too much. It doesn't lead to individual uniqueness, and that's the most important thing to find.

You've been nicknamed the David Beckham of classical music. Would you agree that David Beckham is the David Garrett of sport, or is there someone else out there?

[Laughs] Well, I've never seen it that way. Interesting! Every time I hear this quote, I refer people to the fact that David Beckham has done a lot of good for sport. He's brought a lot of people into football, over his skills, his looks. You see what he's done for the sport in the US and he's an ambassador. In the end, that's what matters.