

DANNY DRIVER

Piano

BIOGRAPHY

Acclaimed British pianist Danny Driver is recognised internationally as an artist of sophistication, insight and musical depth. His studies at Cambridge University and the Royal College of Music inspired his uniquely holistic approach to performance and have enabled him to cultivate an enviably broad repertoire encompassing works from Bach and Handel to Ligeti and Adès. In 2020, Driver has released his latest album of Ligeti's Etudes on the Hyperion label to unanimous high praise, with BBC Music Magazine writing, 'The Études require even more virtuosity...of a brain-teasing sort, and Danny Driver supplies it all.' Despite the difficulties of lockdown, Driver has given four live streamed recitals from Wigmore Hall, some also broadcast by BBC Radio 3.

Summer 2021 sees him return to the Lichfield Festival for five recitals, a three-concert residency at Lammermuir Festival in September (2021) with violinist Chloë Hanslip and a planned return to the Bard Music Festival. Further highlights of the 2021/22 season include Rachmaninov Piano Concerto No.2 with the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra at the Royal Albert Hall, a three-concert Ligeti series at the Wigmore Hall planned later in the season, Schumann Piano Concerto with the Uppsala Chamber Orchestra in Sweden and a performance of the Amy Beach Piano Concerto in Istanbul for International Women's Day in 2022.

A Gramophone Award nominated artist, Driver has performed with orchestras across the globe, highlights of which include BBC Scottish Symphony Orchestra, Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment, BBC NOW, Hallé Orchestra, Minnesota Orchestra, Bournemouth Symphony Orchestra, American Symphony Orchestra, RTÉ Concert Orchestra, Hong Kong Pro Arte, Queensland Symphony Orchestra and Uppsala Chamber Orchestra. His long-standing collaboration with the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra continues and has seen performances across the UK, at London's Cadogan Hall and the BBC Proms (where he has performed twice as a soloist). He has worked with conductors Andrew Litton, Martyn Brabbins, Dalia Stasevska, Alexander Shelley, Mario Venzago, Marzena Diakun, Rebecca Miller, Rory Macdonald and Sir James Macmillan to name but a few.

Driver is equally at home as a recital artist, bringing his unique and insightful brand of programming to concert halls and music festivals across Europe, Asia and North America. Most recent highlights include recitals at the Wigmore Hall (where Driver is regularly invited to perform), London Southbank Centre's International Piano Series, Lichfield Festival (as their Artist-in-Residence), Ryedale Festival, Gothenburg Chamber Music Festival, Music Toronto, Salle Bourgie in Montreal, Musée de l'Orangerie in Paris, and several performances of Ligeti's Piano Études interlaced with Debussy's complete Images across the United States, the U.K and Japan. Driver's passion for chamber music sees him regularly invited to such esteemed chamber music festivals as Oxford May Music, O/Modernt, Eilat, Bard Music Festival, Carducci Festival, and Australian Chamber Music Festival while he enjoys long-standing musical partnerships with violinist Chloë Hanslip and baritone Christian Immler.

Driver's decade-long relationship with the prestigious Hyperion Records label has spawned a varied and internationally acclaimed discography of works by Carl Philipp Emanuel Bach, Handel, York Bowen, Benjamin Dale, Mili Balakirev, Robert Schumann, and Erik Chisholm. His current release of Ligeti's Études has met with great critical acclaim;

“Driver, as fleet of finger as this formidably challenging writing demands, has a mind that searches beyond contrivance; these are transfixing performances.”

THE SUNDAY TIMES

As a recording artist, Driver has always excelled. Of his first volume of C P E Bach Sonatas, Bryce Morrison wrote in Gramophone: “It would be impossible to overestimate Driver's impeccable technique and musicianship”. He has recorded Volume 70 of Hyperion's Romantic Piano Concerto series, featuring piano concertos by Amy Beach, Dorothy Howell, and Cécile Chaminade. His recordings have won him numerous awards including Limelight Magazine's Instrumental Recording of the Year 2014, and his recent inclusion in the New York Times' list of 2017's Best Classical Recordings (Beach, Howell and Chaminade concertos with BBCSSO). He has also recorded the Beethoven Violin Sonatas Cycle with recital partner Chloë Hanslip for the Rubicon label.

DANNY DRIVER

Piano

REVIEWS



'Driver, as fleet of finger as this formidably challenging writing demands, has a mind that searches beyond contrivance; these are transfixing performances'

Ligeti Etudes Books 1-3 Recording
The Sunday Times, April 2021

'He articulates the cross-rhythmic interplay of 'Touches bloquées' with the utmost independence from both hands and maintains a relaxed repartee between the left-hand scales and right-hand chords in 'Fanfares'... Driver builds the central climax of 'Arc-en ciel' carefully and shades the gorgeous harmonies without milking them... because Driver doesn't stampede through 'Coloana infinită', for once you can hear the actual pitches in those murky chordal pile-ups. The four Book 3 Études are no less detailed and vocally informed via Driver's polished fingers and mindful musicianship. These qualities find a literary counterpart in the pianist's informative, caring and well-written booklet notes. In essence, Driver's Ligeti Études complement rather than compete with Aimard and Ullén, and that's high praise.'

Ligeti Etudes Books 1-3 Recording
Gramophone, April 2021

'For his Wigmore Hall recital, broadcast live for BBC Radio 3... [Danny Driver] chose a programme that was demanding, exposed and imaginative and rose to its ferocious challenges as if butter wouldn't melt.... Two Ligeti etudes, "Entrelacs" and "Fanfares" were welcome modern masterpieces, fascinating interplays of time and timbre, requiring nerves of steel and laser-sharp fingerwork. Put one note out of place and the entire edifice would crash down. Driver, though, not only presented ideal technique but the ability to define and make audible the many simultaneous strands that add up to Liget dizzying sleight-of-hand. From the back of the hall, the effect is quite magical'

Wigmore Hall Recital
The Arts Desk, October 2020

'This was a performance of dauntless clarity, understated wit and graceful vitality.'

Lammermuir Festival
The Guardian

'They require even more virtuosity, sometimes of a brain-teasing sort, and Danny Driver supplies it all, beginning with a rock-solid attack in the polyrhythms of 'Désordre'. A haunting beauty is quick to arrive in 'Cordes à vide', and the contrasts keep coming... Driver paces 'L'escalier du diable' securely and allows the final Canon to evaporate with a shrug, leaving you wanting more. Had ill-health not intervened Ligeti would have written more; but here the cycle feels satisfyingly complete. Five stars.'

Ligeti Etudes Books 1-3 Recording
BBC Music Magazine, April 2021

'Driver's recording of Ligeti's virtuosity-testing Études is full of insight and exuberance. It's clearly music that he admires hugely and understands profoundly, and, as he writes in his sleeve notes, the challenge is "putting the emotional and evocative power of these pieces centre stage despite their intransigent virtuosity". He manages to do that better than any of the other complete surveys of these pieces I've heard; only Pierre-Laurent Aimard's magisterial recordings, split across two totally separate discs, match and sometimes surpass his insights. But Driver's performances certainly leave no doubt of the music's dazzling originality and enduring importance.'

Ligeti Etudes Books 1-3 Recording
The Guardian, March 2021

'Miraculously, Driver appeared as relaxed at the end of this stupendous afternoon's playing as he had before beginning. Having mentioned Ligeti's assertion that playing the piano should be a physical pleasure he had certainly embodied that belief throughout this wonderfully conceived and stunningly executed programme. This was the most life-affirming concert I've attended in a long time.'

Lammermuir Festival
Bachtrack

'This country is blessed with several exceptional pianists of the younger generation, of whom Danny Driver most assuredly is one. Indeed, the more I hear of Driver, the higher my opinion of him rises. His Wigmore Hall programme had been planned with no little artistry and insight, and his wonderfully controlled and expressive playing throughout, allied to a superb technique and deep musical feeling, are qualities not often encountered in pianists of any generation.'

Royal Philharmonic Orchestra
Beethoven Piano Concerto No.4, Cadogan Hall
Seen and Heard

'Driver's sound is broad and imposing... he allows the melodies to ring out and, without ever falling into sentimentality, gives free rein to his feeling... This seemingly unbridled force does not prevent him from playing with delicacy in the more delicate moments, nor from giving the melodies a subtle phrasing... The last movement exceeded all our expectations. Here, Driver commanded a powerful sound. These were dizzying rhythms, abrupt accents, and increasingly furious cries, until the last measures in fortissimo. Under the fingers of Driver, the piano grew to a great roar!'

Recital in La Salle Bourgie, Montreal
Bachtrack