Pianists from the inside

A site for Pianists and piano lovers alike

- Earliest memory involving piano playing?
I grew up in Guangzhou, southern China, a city close to the sea. My parents bought me my first piano when I was just 2 years old, not a common thing in the China of the 80's. My dad had to sell his motorbike to raise the funds. Once a week from the age of four, bereft of motorbike and whatever the weather, my father carried me on his bicycle for 45 minutes to get me to my piano lessons.

-Favorite work/composer /why?
I feel very close to Mozart, Schubert, late Beethoven, French music such as Debussy, Ravel, Franck, Faure. I seem to be able to relate to their music naturally, I feel that inherently I know what they were saying.

-What motivates you to play Piano?
To me, Music is a language that connects to the whole universe. In their own way every one can understand it without translation and I feel privileged to be able to 'speak' this language. In life, we all try very hard to express ourselves, through different methods. Writing down music is the way of composers to express their feelings. Likewise, playing the piano is my secret path to their great souls.

-Proudest Moment (Career highlight)?
08/09 season, as the UK's representative to the European Concert Halls Organisation (ECHO) rising star series, I gave concerts in 12 major halls including Amsterdam's Concertgebouw, Vienna's Konzerthaus, Luxembourg Philharmonie, Salzburg 's Mozarteum and Birmingham's Symphony and Town Halls. It was a fantastic experience, when I finished my recital in the Concertgebouw, the audiences began to stand one by one and soon it was my first standing ovation; I will never forget that moment.

-In your opinion, what are the most important qualities in a great pianist?
Musicianship, great pianists are those who have something to tell, they have the genuine connection with the composers and understand the music like they wrote it, the ability to reveal the covered beauty and surprise their audience.

-The biggest challenge you have overcome (in piano playing)
Knowing and accepting the fact that I will never be completely happy with my playing.

Interview by Malan Vaughan Wilkinson