

David Garrett - violino

David Garrett can look back over an incomparable twenty-year career. Since autumn 2007, with the release of his first crossover album "Virtuoso", he has gradually redefined standards in the classical and crossover scene. A native of Aachen, the son of a German lawyer and an American prima ballerina, he was given his first violin at the age of four and made his first appearance with the Hamburg Philharmonic at the early age of ten. At thirteen he was the youngest artist to be awarded an exclusive contract with Deutsche Grammophon. In 1999, at the height of his career, the rising star took the decision to leave his predetermined path as a classical violinist and move to New York – not to take a career break, but rather to improve his musical knowledge and perfect his technique. He enrolled at the prestigious Julliard School, studying musicology and composition.

Study with Itzhak Perlmann gave a whole new dimension to his performances. David Garrett's particular enthusiasm for studying composition brought him distinction in 2003 when he won the renowned Composition Competition at the Julliard School with a fugue composed in the style of Johann Sebastian Bach. This laid the foundation for what have become legendary arrangements. His highly esteemed American composition teacher Eric Ewazen said of him, "as a violinist, his spectacular, heartfelt and expressive playing already dazzled – even when he was a student – those of us who had the great pleasure of teaching him, and we recognized his extraordinary gifts and his amazing talent."

Since completing his studies, the visionary violinist has committed himself to a clearly defined goal – introducing young people to the classics and kindling enthusiasm for so-called 'serious' music. Combining classical elements with those of pop and rock as well as rhythm and blues is a means to this end and with this, he is following in the steps of his heroes, for the great virtuosos from Paganini to Heifetz did exactly the same with their styles then.

Whereas many conservative contemporaries wonder whether uncompromising excellence and popularity, art and commerce can or may even be reconciled, David Garrett long ago proved that it is possible, enthraling listeners of all ages. The same new, incredibly electrifying spirit pervades lofty philharmonic halls holding sold-out classical concerts and open-air arenas staging crossover programmes.

People sense that they are being taken seriously, that a person is performing who approaches the task with the utmost discipline while creating an awareness of various musical genres and styles. Garrett's desire to diminish the awe of classical music felt by young audiences in particular, to spark a whirlwind in the music scene while striving to sweep as many people off their feet as he possibly can, is fulfilled to an overwhelming degree.

David Garrett is not only a technically brilliant recording artist who has received the praise and support of such eminent violin virtuosos as Isaac Stern, Yehudi Menuhin and in particular Ida Haendel. His greatness is also reflected in his mental approach. As one of the few classically versed artists, he has an undistorted perspective on tradition and modernity. Thinking in terms of fixed categories is foreign to him. "In my eye, the Paganinis, Liszts and Chopins of the 19th century were the world's first rock stars," he says. Garrett knows the secrets of great music and understands that the more substance a work has, the more possibilities an artist has to make it his own and place it in new contexts. "Bach arranged Vivaldi, and Mozart arranged Turkish marches. Beethoven wanted to enchant the masses too, employing musical means to this end. Great composers have always incorporated elements which were popular in their day and there is nothing reprehensible about that. On the contrary."

Thus his musical expertise inspired him to interlace Michael Jackson's Smooth Criminal with Mozart's Turkish March – and he did so before Michael Jackson's death, before the world paid tribute to this exceptional talent. David Garrett sets trends of his own because he is also ahead of his time. And yet he knows that talent and a command of one's instrument cannot suffice alone if one is to intellectually and spiritually penetrate a work and gain a grasp of it. A background knowledge of music theory enables the well-travelled artist to analyze and scrutinize scores. "Many great works are unbelievably rich in diverse possibilities. A certain passage in Mozart's Turkish March and one in Smooth Criminal have almost the same harmonic progression. This goes to show that apart from instrumentation, music has hardly changed at all over the past 250 years. We continue to work with the same material."

Only this mixture of perfectionism and openness, thoroughgoingness and foresight explain the overwhelming success which David Garrett has had since the release of Virtuoso. With this recording the artist presented the public with his vision of how various musical styles can be creatively fused at a high artistic level without compromising musical standards. The succession of his own compositions, interspersed with arrangements of classical pieces ranging from the virtuoso "Paganini Rhapsody," based on Caprice No. 24 by Niccolò Paganini, to the emotionally intense rock classic "Nothing Else Matters" by "Metallica", have stunned the music world. Advocates and critics sparked off a dialogue about musical orientations which has rekindled and refocused interest in how music communicates itself.

The artist was rewarded with an ECHO Classic 2008 in the category "Classic without Borders." "Encore" followed

fast on this first success in October 2008, even surpassing the previous release as a follow-up album. In the USA, "David Garrett" remained at number one in the classical and classical crossover charts for months.

With the album "Classic Romance", released in November 2009 with the Deutsches Symphonie-Orchester Berlin and Andrew Litton, the violin virtuoso returned to classic turf. He created a special, very personal CD centred on Mendelssohn's Violin Concerto, accompanied by seven small works from the classical and romantic periods. "Classic Romance" had an enormous resonance, winning Garrett the ECHO Classic 2010 in the "Bestseller of the Year" category. "Classical music is where my heart lies and I am elated that I succeed in bringing my message across to the audience."

In June 2010 all the star violinist's musical activities to date culminated in a further exciting challenge: Rock Symphonies. At a legendary concert at Park Wuhlheide in Berlin, David Garrett delivered an unprecedentedly individual "musical address" to his multi-generational audience. Classics from all epochs – from the baroque period to modern times, from Bach to Nirvana – were presented in a newly arranged symphonic idiom. Once again his courage to embrace new things was rewarded: in 2011 he received no fewer than two ECHO awards for his "Rock Symphonies". The DVD "David Garrett: Rock Symphonies – Open Air Live" was distinguished in the category "Best Domestic DVD Production" and as "Best Artist" in the category "Rock/Pop Domestic". "To date," Garrett says, "'Rock Symphonies' is my most extraordinary and ambitious project. For this reason I look forward to getting together with the guys in my band, the orchestra and the audience on the 2011 Tour. For me, these people are all part of one large musical family."

Apart from the successful Rock Symphonies Tour, 2011 was entirely devoted to classical music for David Garrett. Invitations took him to renowned festivals at Verbier, the "Kissinger Sommer" and the Enescu Festival Bucharest, the Concertgebouw Amsterdam and to perform with orchestras including the Vienna Symphony Orchestra, the Russian National Philharmonic Orchestra and the Museumsorchester Frankfurt. In the autumn, the star violinist was also an honorary jury member at the International Music Competition Cologne, which is hosted by the Hochschule für Musik und Tanz Köln.

With his new album "Legacy", released at the beginning of November 2011 on the DECCA label, the artist fulfilled a lifelong dream. As well as Beethoven's Violin Concerto, which David Garrett describes as the "king of the violin literature", the CD includes selected works by Fritz Kreisler. Kreisler was not only a celebrated violinist, but also a gifted composer. He wrote two beautiful solo cadenzas for Beethoven's concerto: a longer one for the first movement and a somewhat shorter one for the third movement. David Garrett regards Fritz Kreisler as a hero, and so, for him, it was natural that he should also perform these two cadenzas.

"Legacy" has enjoyed extraordinary success: on its release, the album entered the Media Control Charts directly at number 6, making it the highest chart entry of a classical instrumental album in German music history. In the classical charts, "Legacy" immediately took the number 1 slot in both England and Germany.

2012 also began creatively and highly successfully for David Garrett: in January, Universal released the DVD "David Garrett: Legacy – Live in Baden-Baden", and "Legacy" achieved gold status as a purely classical album. A tour of the United States followed in February, and in March David Garrett was in south-east Asia. From April the violinist will open a new chapter in the realm of crossover: the Rock Anthems Tour promises new arrangements, songs and sounds. With the Sinfonieorchester Basel and Dennis Russell Davies he will perform the Beethoven Violin Concerto. His recital tour takes him to the Philharmonic Halls of Berlin, Munich, and Cologne, as well as the Alte Oper Frankfurt, Leipzig Gewandhaus and the Teatro Massimo Bellini, Catania. In May 2012, David Garrett makes his debut with the Orchestra Sinfonica di Milano Giuseppe Verdi and John Axelrod.

David plays the "A. Busch" Stradivarius (1716)

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