

**FILIPPO
GORINI**
SONATA FOR
7 CITIES

LIVE IN CAPE TOWN
GARDELLA SCHUMANN SCHUBERT

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MENU

> TRACKLIST

> ENGLISH TEXT

FEDERICO GARDELLA (*1979)

SONATA D'ALTURA *WORLD PREMIERE PERFORMANCE*

- | | | |
|---|-----------------------|------|
| 1 | I. Immobile, fulmineo | 9'25 |
| 2 | II. Intermezzo | 3'31 |
| 3 | III. Precipitato | 8'22 |

ROBERT SCHUMANN (1810-1856)

KREISLERIANA, OP.16

- | | | |
|----|-----------------------------------|-------|
| 4 | I. Äußerst bewegt | 2'14 |
| 5 | II. Sehr innig und nicht zu rasch | 10'48 |
| 6 | III. Sehr aufgeregt | 5'19 |
| 7 | IV. Sehr langsam | 4'14 |
| 8 | V. Sehr lebhaft | 3'23 |
| 9 | VI. Sehr langsam | 5'08 |
| 10 | VII. Sehr rasch | 2'36 |
| 11 | VIII. Schnell und spielend | 3'04 |

FRANZ SCHUBERT (1797-1828)

PIANO SONATA IN B-FLAT MAJOR, D.960

- | | | |
|----|--|-------|
| 12 | I. Molto moderato | 24'34 |
| 13 | II. Andante sostenuto | 11'43 |
| 14 | III. Scherzo. Allegro vivace con delicatezza | 4'34 |
| 15 | IV. Allegro ma non troppo | 9'33 |

TOTAL TIME: 108'38

FILIPPO GORINI PIANO



Visit at St Vincent's primary school. The children were a delight, welcomed me by singing traditional choral music and then happily listened to several pieces by Schubert, Beethoven, Schumann. But more than anything they were fascinated by the beautiful grand piano generously provided by Ian Burgess Simpson: I had them come close, showed them how everything works and then gently let them play with this magnificent toy!



Raymond Schuller (in the photo) is the director of a local non-profit, "MusicWorks", which brings music programs to less fortunate schools in Cape Town and the nearby area. I was impressed by how well the children could sing, with great intonation and genuine expression, and with how much joy they reacted to the piano and my music making.

SONATA FOR 7 CITIES - CAPE TOWN

BY FILIPPO GORINI

Sonata for 7 Cities is more than a project to me: it is my expression of all the things I hold dearest in life, my love letter to music and to humanity. Instead of travelling constantly from one concert venue to another, I decided to focus on 7 cities, where I stayed for one month and offered everything I could to its community. The journey started in Vienna, a city that is central to my music, traversed all other continents to end in Milan, my home.

In each city, I played a recital crafted around works by Beethoven, Schubert, Schumann and Brahms, as well as new pieces commissioned for this project. With this repertoire, I also brought free concerts to schools, universities, hospitals, retirement homes, prisons, homeless shelters, disadvantaged neighbourhoods... places this moving music usually does not reach. I performed concertos, chamber music, taught young musicians, and developed genuine connections with local people, to whom my music brought life, tears, joy. It is this special energy that these live albums capture, making them exceptionally meaningful to me.

I stayed in Cape Town from August 21 to September 26th 2025. My time there was focused on supporting music education, visiting several different schools and music schools, especially those working with children from underprivileged backgrounds, playing for them and encouraging their work. I also taught several talented piano students, performed recitals, chamber music, and the Emperor Concerto. I will never forget the smiles I saw, the warmth with which I was always welcomed, the sublime beauty of the Atlantic and Indian Ocean mixing at Cape of Good Hope or the watchful presence of Table Mountain. I saw the elephants and the penguins, I had delicious braais and fine wines. Most importantly, I made friends that will last a lifetime, and made a difference in the lives of wonderful people.

At the center of all this was the recital in this album, recorded in City Hall, where Mandela gave his first speech after his release from prison. I recorded the album live, in the presence of only a few of the people that gave the most meaning to my month there. The programme was a powerful meditation

on the human experience of joy and sorrow, of danger and tenderness, of spirituality and humour, and finally dance. In recording, we searched for a poetic sound that could capture the interior landscape of a performance deeply connected to the resonances in this deep, wide hall.

Federico Gardella began writing the “Sonata d’altura” (“Mountain Sonata”) while also writing his first opera, “Else”. Based on a novella by Arthur Schnitzler, the opera presented a progressively degenerating tragic plot where mountains act as a monumental background impassible towards the tragedy of young Else. In the mesmerising Sonata, a ritual “gong” in the bass register rings like a fatal bell, immersed in entrancing landscapes sculpted or broken by harsh gestures in the extreme registers of the piano. The third movement reaches a static, but not peaceful, ending, as if the turmoil we have traversed has left little mark on the mountains silently observing.

Also inspired by literature are Schumann’s Kreisleriana, eight fantasies exploring his full emotional range. Johannes Kreisler is a witty, kaleidoscopic character in E. T. A. Hoffmann’s novels, and Schumann’s work (put to paper in only four days of feverish creative passion) recreates the complex personality portrayed in the novels. The fantasies range from relentless speed to warm lyricism, from rhythmical drive to witty playfulness, from inscrutable depth to the nocturnal dance of elves that ends the piece mysteriously at the very bottom of the keyboard.

Schubert’s Sonata in B Flat Major (the same key as the lyrical pieces in Kreisleriana) is a long journey into the complex landscapes of a soul in the liminal space between this world and mystery, filled with tenderness and melancholy rather than funereal desperation. The music wanders through a world where in a single turn of harmony, Schubert can lift us from an abyss into the brightest hope or heroic love, or fall from tenderness into darkness. After the Scherzo, the Sonata turns drastically, finding playful lightness again, and finally ending the work with positive strength. This was Schubert’ last major work for piano, written in 1828 closely before his death at 31, and its unique psychological depth makes it one of the most moving pieces ever written.



to Masi Violin Outreach, a small music school run with contagious energy by Nadiah Mony in the township of Masiphumelele. The townships are developing areas with extreme poverty and high crime rates, but the students I encountered all found calm and beauty listening to my Schubert. After that, we jammed some of the songs they were working on!



Some more playful time with Nadiah and two advanced students, as well as my youngest ever chamber music partner in his flaming red sweater!

FILIPPO GORINI

Filippo Gorini's musicianship has drawn acclaim in recitals in the major venues in Europe and abroad, ranging from Milan's Teatro alla Scala to Carnegie Hall, from Amsterdam Concertgebouw to Wigmore Hall, as well as with orchestras such as the Santa Cecilia Orchestra in Rome, the Salzburg Mozarteum Orchester, the Orchestre Nationale de Lille, the Nagoya Philharmonic, the Opera Nacional de Chile, under conductors such as Daniele Gatti, Hartmut Haenchen, Junichi Hirokami.

Critics praise his serious and soulful approach to composers like Bach, Beethoven and Schubert, as well as his daring programmes involving music from by composers such as Stockhausen and Kurtág, and commissioning new works. He has also created a multi-disciplinary project on the Art of Fugue featuring interviews to personalities such as Frank Gehry, Peter Sellars, Alexander Sokurov, as well as starting Sonata for 7 Cities, a series of month-long residencies dedicated to performance, education, and philanthropy.

Filippo has received the "Premio Abbiati", the most prestigious musical recognition in Italy, in 2022, as well as the Borletti-Buitoni Trust Award 2020 and First Prize at the Telekom-Beethoven Competition 2015. His three albums featuring Beethoven and Bach late works, released on Alpha Classics, have garnered critical acclaim, including a Diapason d'Or Award and 5-star reviews on The Guardian, BBC Music Magazine, Le Monde.

After graduating with honours from the Donizetti Conservatory in Bergamo and the Mozarteum University in Salzburg, Filippo's development was further supported by Maria Grazia Bellocchio, Pavel Gililov, Alfred Brendel and Mitsuko Uchida.

FEDERICO GARDELLA

Federico Gardella was born in Milan in 1979. His music has been featured in many important festivals and concert seasons in Tokyo, Milan, New York, Firenze, and many more. He has been awarded prizes in many international composition competitions including the Takefu International Composition Award, the First Prize of the Toru Takemitsu Composition Award, and the "Una Vita nella Musica - Giovani" Prize at the Teatro La Fenice in Venezia.

He has been composer in residence at the Divertimento Ensemble, the Fondation Royaumont, the Festival Neue Musik Rockenhausen and Marcello Lotti Italian Fellow in Music at the American Academy in Rome.

His works have been performed by the Orchestra Sinfonica Nazionale della Rai, the Tokyo Philharmonic Orchestra, the Orchestra del Maggio Musicale Fiorentino, the Deutsche Staatsphilharmonie, the Orchestra del Teatro La Fenice and the Hiroshima Symphony Orchestra, and he also collaborates with the Arditti Quartet, the Quatuor Diotima, the Hilliard Ensemble, the Neue Vocalsolisten Stuttgart, the Remix Ensemble and the Scharoun Ensemble of the Berliner Philharmoniker.

Federico Gardella studied composition at the Milan Conservatory with Sonia Bo and Alessandro Solbiati and at the Accademia Nazionale di Santa Cecilia in Rome with Azio Corghi. Moreover, his acquaintance with Toshio Hosokawa

has been of significant importance to his artistic path. His music is published by SZ Sugar.

The beautiful garden outside the school offers a safe area to play for all the kids and we could not resist taking a group photo there!





Part of my trip moved away from Cape Town to Gqeberha (Port Elizabeth), in the Eastern Cape. I performed Beethoven's Fifth Piano Concerto with Daniel Boico conducting the Easter Cape Philharmonic and spent a few days teaching local students and exploring the beautiful coast and safari parks there.



An intimate recital offered at St. George's Cathedral in Cape Town.



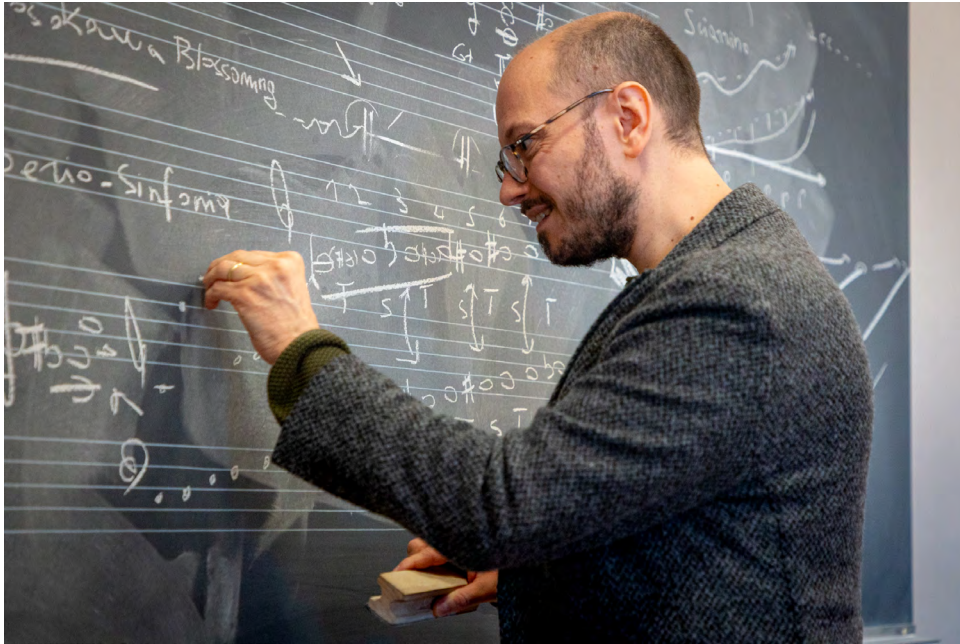
Another touching visit: the Handevat Music Project, in Mthimkhulu (Kleinmond). I played a small recital, taught a couple young kids and then enjoyed being treated to lively music on marimbas as well as a boerewors braai (look it up, it is delicious!) Stefné van Dyk is teaching them well, demanding that serious discipline and commitment always go along with enjoyment.



The Kronendal Music Academy, working with children from Imizamo Yethu in the Hout Bay area, welcomed me in two separate visits. I loved my time there: they created a small paradise where children can do their homework, play and study music, followed by wonderful volunteers led by the visionary Dwyn Griesel. The number of different instruments they are teaching and the size of their team and campus are really an achievement and make a huge difference in the life of many children there.



Sharing a hug with Federico Gardella on stage after premiering his beautiful "Sonata d'altura" at Stellenbosch University's Endler Hall



Both me and Federico taught with great passion at the University of Cape Town. I was so impressed by two of my students, Isaac van der Merwe and Dané van Graan, that I later developed an extensive scholarship programme for them to spend time in Europe.



Ian Burgess-Simpson lovingly preparing the piano in the gorgeous Cape Town City Hall for the recording session.

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