

Richard Clayderman

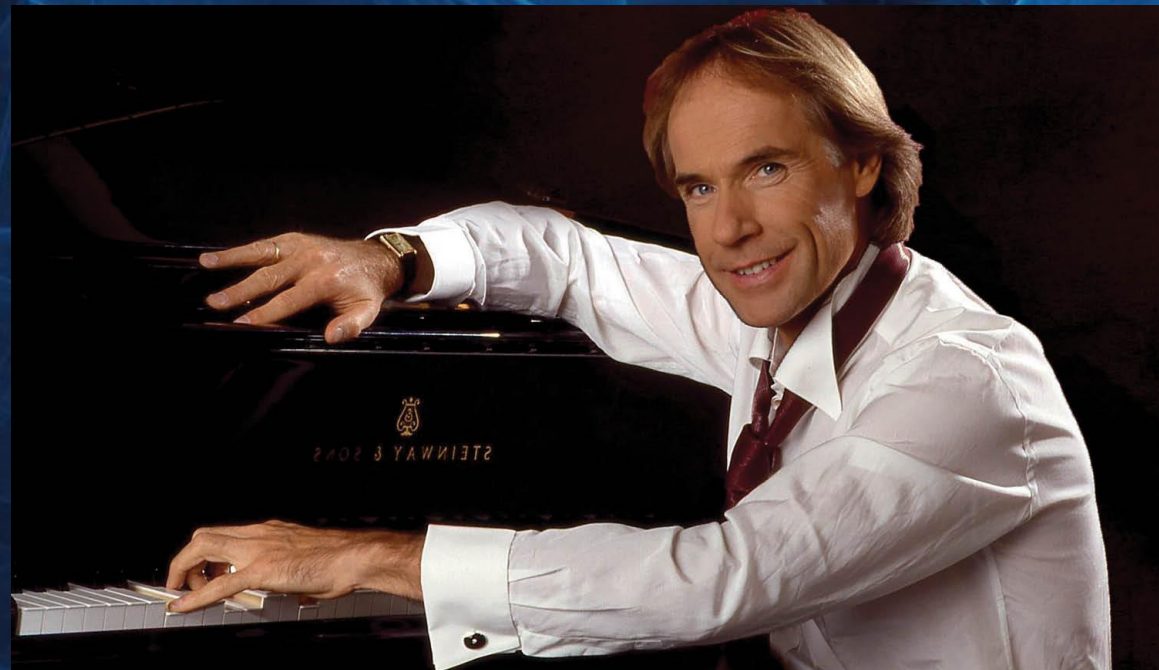
has done what virtually no other French act has ever done.....
established a truly international career
as a best selling recording artist and concert performer.

Born Philippe Pagès on December 28th, 1953, he encountered the piano early in his life. His father, a piano teacher, laid the foundation for his son's later success and began teaching him how to play at a very young age. It is said that, at the age of six, Richard Clayderman could read music more adeptly than his native French.

Early Success

When he was twelve years old he was accepted at the Conservatoire of Music where, at sixteen, he won first prize. He was predicted a promising career as a classical pianist. However, shortly after this, and much to everyone's surprise, he cast aside his classical training and turned to contemporary music.

"I wanted to do something different", Clayderman says, "So, with some friends, I created a rock group; it was a tough time..... a hard time..... and the little money we could make was devoted to buying equipment. In fact, I used to feed myself so badly – mainly on sandwiches – that I had to have an operation for an ulcer when I was only seventeen".



Accompanist

At that time his father was becoming seriously ill and was unable to support his son financially. So, in order to earn a living, Clayderman found work as an accompanist and session musician. "I enjoyed it", he says, "and it paid well at the same time. That is how I drew away from classical music, although it gave me a strong basis for what I do now".

His talent did not go unnoticed and he soon became much in demand as an accompanist to such major French stars as Michel Sardou, Thierry LeLuron and Johnny Halliday. But, when asked about his ambitions at that time, he says, "I really did not want to be a star, I was happy to be an accompanist and to play in groups".

Delphine

Nevertheless, his life changed dramatically in 1976 when he received a telephone call from Olivier Toussaint, a well-known French record producer, who, with his partner, Paul de Senneville, was looking for a pianist to record a gentle piano ballad. Paul had composed this ballad as a tribute to his new born daughter "Adeline". The 23 year old Philippe Pagès was auditioned along with 20 other hopefuls and, to his amazement, he got the job.

"We liked him immediately", says Paul de Senneville, "His very special and soft touch on the keyboards combined with his reserved personality and good looks very much impressed Olivier Toussaint and I. We made our decision very quickly".

Ballade pour Adeline

Philippe Pagès' name was changed to Richard Clayderman (he adopted his great-grandmother's last name to avoid mispronunciation of his real name outside France), and the single took off, selling an astonishing 22 million copies in 38 countries. It was called "Ballade pour Adeline".

"When I signed him", says Olivier Toussaint, "I told him that if we sell 10,000 singles it will be marvellous, because it was disco at that time and we could not bet on such a ballad being a winner..... We could not imagine that it would be so big".



Prolific artist

It was the start of what has become an outstanding success story, and since that time, Richard Clayderman's distinctive piano style has earned him superstar status all over the world. Today he has recorded over 1, 200 melodies and, in the words of a German journalist, "he has arguably done more to popularise the piano around the world than anyone since Beethoven".

Richard Clayderman has created a "New Romantic" style through a repertoire which combines his 'trademark' originals with classics and pop standards. He has clocked up massive worldwide record sales of approximately 90 million, at the last count, and an incredible 267 Gold and 70 Platinum discs to his credit.

However, "The Prince of Romance" (as he was dubbed by Nancy Reagan) is not simply a recording artist. In fact, despite his natural shyness and reserve, he is completely in his element on stage ; a Richard Clayderman concert is a real 'Spectacular'.



World tours

"I love performing live on stage", he says, "because I have direct contact with my audience. In concert, with my 10 musicians or a symphony orchestra, I like to mix different tempos, rhythms and styles to evoke all kinds of emotion".

Clayderman's international success has resulted in a punishing itinerary which, in the past, has seen him play as many as 200 concerts in just 250 days spent outside France. In spite of this, he remains very much a family man.

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