

Darren Creech (BMus '12) is redefining the classical concert stage

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In a profile by CBC Music written earlier this year, Laurier alumnus Darren Creech is described as demonstrating “his belief in a new potential for the classical concert stage.”

For Darren, reimagining the way classical music is presented is about building a deeper connection with his audiences. He combines storytelling, fashion and staging to lead the audience on an emotional journey.

“I push boundaries on stage, covering my hair in glitter, and playing with print and movement of fabric. By embracing my queerness and rejecting the unwritten, but powerful ideas of what is deemed “acceptable” to wear on stage in

classical culture, I am able to embrace my own identity and create space for a wider spectrum of identities and bodies on stage,” he says. “I want my audiences to find themselves reflected in what they see on stage, and it is exciting to feel this connection.”

His approach is resonating with audiences. Darren is a two-time finalist in CBC Music's Piano Hero contest, and he was awarded the Best Artist Prize during Nuit Rose, an annual festival of queer-focused art and performance that takes place as part of Toronto Pride.

Darren draws on a variety of diverse experiences in crafting his performances. Born in Ontario, he spent his adolescence in Senegal, West Africa. Growing up in a cross-cultural environment allowed him to experience other perspectives and question conventional expectations. He also attends a wide variety of performing arts, including non-classical events, all of which influence and inspire him.

His music degree at Laurier was also part of defining his vision for performing on his own terms. “I came directly to Laurier having moved from Senegal, and the supportive community environment at the Faculty of Music gave me space to explore my ideas and strengthen my

weaknesses. I was able to develop my skills as a pianist, and successfully presented my first staged narrative concert as my Bachelor's graduation recital.”

The culmination of his degree in that final recital, complete with recorded program notes, lighting effects, costume changes, 250+ people in the audience, and a reception catered by friends and family made it unforgettable—and his favourite memory from his time at Laurier.

Now, Darren is continuing to redefine the boundaries of what is acceptable and meaningful on the classical stage

Photo by Chloe Squance.

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