



Romain Thiery Interview.

Hello and thank you so much for talking with us. Can you introduce yourself? Who is Romain Thiery and How were your musical beginnings?

My name is Romain Thiery, I'm a self-taught professional photographer, born on July 4 1988 in south of France. Today, I live near Montpellier. I'm an amateur pianist starting learning piano at the age of 5 years old in a musical school in the town where I am born. I started photography 10 years ago following the work of my mother specialized in heritage photography. That hobby turned into a passion and, eventually, a profession the day I found a forgotten piano in an abandoned castle in south of France. I made my life's mission to combine my two biggest passions and set out to find abandoned mansions around Europe where old pianos had been left behind

Do you think that studying in a conservatory is essential to be a good musician?

I think that becoming a professional musician is the dream of many people. It was also mine a few years ago. I also think that the conservatory is a reference in terms of musical learning.

Conservatories remain good schools for learning music but do not suit everyone because the dream or goal of any conservatory is to train virtuosos, to find excellence but this discourages many until it disgusts them from the discipline. I have many examples around me. They know how to get the best out of a student, but it requires a lot of sacrifices that some are not ready to make.

You started as a pianist.... How did the photography come about? And how did you start with your project with abandoned pianos?

In 2014, in an abandoned castle in the southwest of France, I found a forgotten piano one day. Few things had resisted the attacks of time and looters, except for that beautiful instrument. Impressive and at the same time incongruous, it was still there. In a place where grace, luxury and a respected novelty used to reign. Since that day, I knew my artistic life would change. The places I am looking for have to be at the crossroads of my artistic worlds: piano and photography. This is the culmination of my

art; my two passions are then united in the same feeling.

An abandoned piano always attracts attention but we believe that people associate it with contexts such as a castle, an old theater... But what is the strangest location where you found a piano?

90% of the time I still find abandoned pianos in bourgeois residences such as castles, palaces and manors where luxury and nobility used to reign. But in some parts of Europe, I regularly find pianos in old abandoned military hospitals. Having the chance to collaborate with associations and historians, I knew that these discoveries were linked to history and essentially to the despoilment of musical instruments during the World Wars.

Definitely, when a piano sounds it tells a story, but if nobody plays it, it seems that a ruined piano transmits much more. Do you agree?

Yes I'm agree with you. I think the piano is an instrument that everybody loves. Even if some people don't know how to play, we always try a piano when we enter a room where there is one. It must be said that musical instruments are, for us, forever beautiful and almost deified. Thus, even when time damages them, we are attached to them. We respect them. But the piano is more than that. It is a reassuring instrument with its natural elegance. Even covered in thick dust it never ceases to impose its nobility and respect. This greatness is rooted in the depths of our culture.

In how many countries have you been keeping track of these old pianos?

I have travelling through France, Belgium, Germany, Spain, Tcheque Republic, Bulgaria, Poland, Romania, Ukraine, Slovenia and Italy.

Where did you find one in Spain?

I never found a forgotten piano in Spain yet. Still looking for abandoned places but very hard to find one. If somebody know some places let me know 😊

Do you have a favorite among all the pianos that you found?

My favorite is the first one I found in 2009. I went there more than 10 times to see the impact of time on the building and the piano. But it's more than that. In the room of this bourgeois residence, in its center, lies a grand piano. There are no other objects left. But he's here, he's not to be missed. On the right, the chimney is in tatters. She was looted, gutted, her marble was taken away. Not much has stood the test of time and vandalism, except the piano. It was at that moment that I understood the power of this instrument and decided to travel the world in search of all these forgotten pianos.

Tell us about your future plans with Requiem pour pianos.

Requiem pour pianos is not over. I'm still searching in Europe and prepare my project out of Europe now. Really want to go to USA and Japan.

My future plans are more with new solo or group exhibitions in galleries or festivals around the world and make some new collaborations with musical institutions. Big projects are coming this year.