

# **Prof. Dr. Thomas Hecht**

*Yong Siew Toh Conservatory of Music (Singapore)*

## **Biography**

Renowned American pianist and pedagogue Thomas Hecht is the founding Head of Keyboard Studies at the Yong Siew Toh (YST) Conservatory. Over the span of nearly three decades he has concertised internationally as concerto soloist, recitalist, chamber musician and as a member of the acclaimed duo-piano team Hecht & Shapiro, winners of the Munich International Two Piano Competition and USA National Duo Piano Competition.

Professor Hecht has performed in many of the world's cultural centres, appearing with leading orchestras such as the New York Philharmonic, Cleveland Orchestra, Baltimore Symphony, Stuttgart Symphony Orchestra, Bavarian Radio Orchestra, Johannesburg Festival Orchestra, Singapore Symphony Orchestra and the New Zealand Symphony Orchestra. Highlights of recent tours include performances at the Lincoln Center in New York, Berlin Philharmonic Hall, the Kennedy Center in Washington, and recitals in Korea, Japan, China, Taiwan, Vietnam, Thailand, Malaysia, Italy, Serbia, Montenegro, Germany, Estonia, Finland, Sweden, Armenia, Artsakh, South Africa, and throughout all the major centres of Australia and New Zealand.

Dr. Hecht also enjoys a well-deserved reputation as one of the leading teachers of his generation, having produced a multitude of first prizewinners in solo and two piano competitions throughout the United States, Europe and Australasia. He has given masterclasses at renowned institutions such as the Royal Academy, Royal Northern and Royal Welsh Colleges of Music, as well as at the Paris, Eastman, Oberlin, Peabody, Sydney and Beijing and Sichuan Conservatories. He recently served as Visiting Professor at the Peabody Institute under the auspices of the first YST-Peabody faculty exchange programme, while other guest residency invitations have included the Conservatoire de Paris, Sibelius Academy, Guildhall College of Music & Drama, the University of Trossingen and the Western Australia Academy for the Performing Arts. His highly sought after piano class has nurtured young talents for over thirty years, producing concerto soloists with leading orchestras on four continents. Two of his Singaporean protégés have been named Young Steinway Artists.

## **Topic Presented**

Launching My Smart Piano Studio

## **Abstract**

My SMART STUDIO project developed as an ongoing pedagogical response to today's tech-savvy performance majors and the ease with which they process information on their personal devices. Drawing inspiration from "SMART" classrooms, the concept similarly addressed shifts in learning and retention paradigms with the launching of a SMART artist faculty studio. My aim was to reach piano students of the 21st century by reimagining teaching philosophies to become more analogous (or, indeed app-licable!) to the very apps that young performers of today encounter on their smart devices. Instruction and critical feedback is delivered utilising these "mental apps" which, when projected onto the wall during the lesson, simulate the touch-screen display of a typical smartphone. Indeed, the incorporation of these 'apps' as the lingua franca of the studio has further unified the wide array of international students in my class, where English is often a second language for many. Teacher and student moreover utilize the app concepts when laying foundations for new pieces as well, so that students begin to better manage 'smart' practice as well!