

# Episode 9: Richard Lewis

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## SUMMARY KEYWORDS

maths, people, felt, music, world, business, bit, musicians, musician, uni, realised, thought, moment, year, playing, writing, big, ideas, artists, listening

## SPEAKERS

Richard Lewis, Hattie Butterworth

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Hattie Butterworth 00:03

Welcome to Things Musicians Don't Talk About with me, your host, Hattie Butterworth. I'm a cellist and writer in my final year at the Royal College of Music in London. And I think we need a new way of talking. I've spent many, many years feeling in the dark about issues in the classical music profession. So often it can feel like you're the only person struggling with anxiety, depression, career doubts, money, injuries, and so much more. Who do we go to when we feel we've had enough, for whatever reason? Join me and guests as we end the stigma with honest conversations about the things musicians don't talk about. Hello, everyone. Welcome back. It's been a few weeks, and I'm sorry about that, but also, it's been a really wonderful, weird in just strange time for me. I think August was, yeah, a hard month, actually. And I did put out a few podcasts at the start of the month. But I think, yeah, I was pushing forward in a time where it was quite clear that I really needed to take a step back. So I'm glad that I did after doing those podcasts that I had a bit of a break and, I mean, I didn't really have a break, because I also finished my degree! So I recorded my recital, about 10 days ago now. So I recorded it at RCM and submitted it and I have officially finished and graduated. So I probably should actually edit the intro for this podcast that says that I'm, you know, in my final year at the Royal College, because you know what? Not anymore. I'm now in the big wide world. Yeah, so it was a struggle to the end and, I mean, I did speak in my solo episode about my recent struggles over the last few months, with my anxiety disorder and basically August, you know, everything came to a head and I struggled a lot. And I very, was very lucky in that I found some wonderful healing and treatment. And yes, I'm now doing so much better. And I'm so, so pleased to be able to say that because it was a very dark time. And, you know, if there was anybody else that felt like they had to struggle to the end of their degree, I'm with you because it was really hard and, yeah, I had a lot of conversations with my Head of Year, my Head of Department sorry, and other people about, you know, maybe having to defer or what I might have to do, because there was a stage where I really couldn't practice at all. And, you know, I could have quite easily just skim over what happened. But, you know, we're being real here, we're being honest and, yeah, we don't talk often about when it goes wrong, and when things are hard. And yes, I was able to get to the end. And I'm really, really pleased about that. And I mean, medication helped me, therapy helped me. And, you know, my family and friends really supported me right to the end, and I know there are times where people don't have access to those kinds of things and you do have to defer and that can feel really hard, so if you have had

to defer this year, or you have struggled to the end of your degree, and it hasn't felt quite like the celebration you were hoping for, I'm with you there completely. But you know, I'm just grateful to be able to say that I'm so much better now and that I've finished. I've also had a big move. So I moved out of my flat in London that I was sharing with my sister, and now I am living in Shropshire, which is bizarre, but it's sort of the best place for me at the moment because it's very close to Manchester and London where lots of my friends are and lots of opportunities are, so I'm going to be doing some commuting, some teaching ... It's just a hard time, you know, I'm having basically a gap year before I start some sort of Masters, which also is very unknown, but yeah, I'm enjoying my time here so far. It's just so much more quiet than London. That's the number one thing and a lot easier to live every day a lot slower. But I am drinking a lot of coffee and going, going out a lot on walks and yeah, I'm having a good time actually. How are you all doing? I hope if you are starting a new course or going into the next year of study or have got just graduated or looking for a job, I hope you're all doing really well and I'm sending you all my best wishes. But yeah, enough of me because today's podcast is not anything to do with me. It's completely about a wonderful musician called Richard Lewis, who has recently made an incredibly brave decision to leave behind the business world that he was immersed in for many years, and full-time dedicate his energy into a new project, which aims to help artists and business people talk to each other, and find a middle ground between being an artist and wanting to help people, but also wanting to earn a living and wanting to create something with a business-minded attitude. So we had such a fascinating conversation. Richards has been a musician all his life and he'll talk more about that. But also he studied maths at Cambridge, and was really involved in that that world, and he talks about how maths was actually a more creative outlet for him at the start. And then as time went on, he realised, as it got harder and as the people got, yeah, as he realised his friends were more musician-minded, that actually, maybe the place was in the music world and was in the creative world. But yeah, we talk about his degree in maths and the motivation behind that, and then moving into the business world and his work in consulting. And now he has some fascinating, incredible plans for the future. And we talk about how you can get involved. So please, do listen. And I really hope you find this as inspiring and completely educational as I did, because you know, my knowledge of the business and maths world is incredibly limited. I'm not going to pretend I know anything about it, but Richard explains it in such an accessible way. And, yes, I really hope you enjoy it. Hi, Richard, thanks so much for joining us today.

R

Richard Lewis 07:04

Hi Hattie, great to be here.

H

Hattie Butterworth 07:06

Yeah. How are you doing at the moment?

R

Richard Lewis 07:09

I'm doing really well, actually. It's been quite a roller coaster couple of weeks because I finished up my, my old day job a couple of weeks ago. And I've been working hard to, to work on all the new ideas I've been having, which I'm sure we'll be talking about.

- H** Hattie Butterworth 07:29  
Yeah, it is such a weird transition time, because I've actually just moved out of London. And I'm now in ...
- R** Richard Lewis 07:35  
Exciting!
- H** Hattie Butterworth 07:35  
Yeah, I'm now in Shropshire of all places...
- R** Richard Lewis 07:38  
Wow!
- H** Hattie Butterworth 07:39  
...which is fun. So I'm here just for the sort of foreseeable future as I like, try and find, you know, work or whatever. But yeah, it's kind of funny, people seem to be all over the place at the moment, which is...
- R** Richard Lewis 07:50  
Yeah!
- H** Hattie Butterworth 07:51  
...interesting. But, yeah, so you have a really interesting path into the music world, which we messaged a bit about. And I kind of thought it would be interesting if you could start by telling us your musical background, and maybe your story in general up until now.
- R** Richard Lewis 08:09  
Sure. So music's always, always been a such a powerful central part of my life. It took me until now to realise quite how big a thing it was for me. I was always interested in music since I was maybe about 10 or 11. I was listening to Classic FM for I went to bed every night. And, and then I started playing the piano and I started trying to write music, and then I got to playing in orchestras at school and, and then when I, when I got to uni, I really took the opportunity to perform a bit more. It was really fun. And then it was, it was after uni when I started, I started out in the real world. I had had a year without doing much music, but then I realised I felt like

there was there was an avenue there for me. And I needed to work out what it was. So I was a bit more focused about trying different things, so I tried doing some orchestration, bit more, playing bit more orchestra stuff, and focusing a lot more on on the piano. And I started learning some jazz piano as well. So really trying out loads of things. All while I was doing all of that, I was learning maths and ended up spending five years in the city, doing consulting work, using quite a bit of maths and for a while that was, that was fun. That was what I wanted to do, and I was learning a lot about how that part of the world works. But as I identified my identity as an artist, I was struggling to feel like I was helping people in the way I was supposed to help. And this all sort of culminated in lockdown, but I also had a six month sabbatical last year to try out being a musician full-time. And I also went on a really interesting leadership and marketing course called the Alt-MBA, which really opened a lot of doors for me, and opened my eyes to lots of things outside the maths part of the business world. In the end, I realised that there were lots of people that I wanted to help, but it probably wasn't going to be much to do with, with maths anymore. So I had to make that big, big switch, which I think my boss said it, said it looked very extreme. But for me, it was just the only way to keep to keep being me.

H

Hattie Butterworth 10:43

Yeah.

R

Richard Lewis 10:43

So that's, that's what I'm working on now is, is helping artists and, and people in the business world, talk to each other, and build a community.

H

Hattie Butterworth 10:52

That is, yeah, that is a fascinating story, and something that I think a lot of people are wanting to do but I think very few musicians really understand the business world on the level that you clearly do. And I just thought maybe you could tell us a bit more about your experience at uni, you know, why did you choose maths and business? And what was your experience at uni? Was that, was that you're passion at the time? Or did it feel like you were kind of coming away from yourself to do that?

R

Richard Lewis 11:21

It's weird, because if I go back, if I think back to school, I was one of those weird kids who did extra maths homework for fun. So I must have really loved it and I did love it. I think my sisters said that I got up before breakfast to solve simultaneous equations or something. But at the same time, I was also, also playing a lot of music. And I think I just had this message that if I wanted to sustain myself, I guess have independence and have freedom, which when you're a kid growing up, that's, that's what you think being an adult is all about. For whatever reason, I thought to do that I had a choice between being a musician and studying maths and, and doing a maths-related job. I guess I just kind of made that assumption that because I seem to really enjoy maths, no matter how much I enjoyed music, maths was... had to be the thing that I studied first. I think the thing I told people is that I could always do music as a hobby, but I

couldn't do maths as a hobby. So I had to do it that way around and looking looking back on it...at the time, it all felt very sensible. It felt like I was being very grown up. But looking back on it, I didn't know myself the way I do now. And to get to where I am now I feel like I had to learn lots of maths. But that was just something, something about me.

H

Hattie Butterworth 12:52

Yeah.

R

Richard Lewis 12:53

It's definitely a big part of how I think about the world. I'm sure we can talk about that in a bit, because it's, it's maybe maybe not what other people mean when they when they say they think in terms of maths. I enjoyed it but I ...to sum up, I was rambling a bit, but to sum up, at uni, I kind of found my limit. I reached a point where maths was getting more frustrating than enjoyable. And meanwhile music, because of course I'd kept it as my hobby, was just kept on being more and more, more and more fun. So in the end, that was what I fell in love with.

H

Hattie Butterworth 13:25

Yeah. Is it something that you kept going through uni in terms of playing with other people? Or was it like a private sort of hobby that you had?

R

Richard Lewis 13:35

For a lot of time, it was very private. There were definitely times where I decided to stay in my room playing on my keyboard instead of going to the party. So yeah, that was when I got addicted, I think, to playing the piano. But also because it, because there were, there were so many new people to meet once I kind of got over the initial fear that I think all of us have when we're in uni, my way of making friends was basically to try and join orchestras and, and try and do some chamber music. At the time, it was all, all classical music because I just thought music equals classical music. So I just ... Yeah, but there was so much of that world I'd only really scratched the surface of that school.

H

Hattie Butterworth 13:45

Yeah. And I kind of was thinking as well.... I mean, my mum actually is always talking about you know, is there this link between maths and music? You know, is there this link? I mean, what ... how do you see the link for you anyway? Because they're both clearly passions that run alongside each other for you. But how do they relate? Quite a hard question probably...

R

Richard Lewis 14:41

it is but it's people ask it a lot.

H

Hattie Butterworth 14:44

Yeah, they do.

R

Richard Lewis 14:46

It's a very interesting one and it... It's a dance. It's, it's kind of one of the oldest dances that humans have been thinking about, maybe sometimes fighting about. And it's because music is consists of patterns, roughly. And usually when you describe patterns, you can use numbers. And I think you end up with this, this tension, this dance, because as soon as you try to put numbers onto the patterns that are in music, you take some of the magic away. But then as soon as you go back to thinking about it like magic, then at some point, you'll want to hold on to it, or find some way of talking about it with your friend.

H

Hattie Butterworth 15:38

Yeah.

R

Richard Lewis 15:40

And then you start to look for tools and then of course, you need some numbers to start pinning it down. So I think it's a very magical link, and I think it goes far deeper than just counting the number of notes in a scale or that kind of thing, I think, especially with the music of Bach, I think, is some of my favourite music that, because it feels like it has this purity, it feels like he knows about this dance very well. It feels like he's, he's able to just let it happen, kind of let, let the moments of magic emerge when they want to, but also keeping this, these beautiful symmetries, these beautiful patterns, and regularities, which kind of contribute to make it very soothing, but also very beautiful.

H

Hattie Butterworth 16:30

Yeah. Thank you for explaining that so well. I mean, I think there has been quite a binary way of looking at maths and music hasn't there? It's been sort of like there were these musicians that are mathematical and then there are these musicians that feel!

R

Richard Lewis 16:45

Yeah!

H

Hattie Butterworth 16:45

I love that you explain it as like, a dance and yeah, shifting from one to the other and a

balance. And I think that's such a good way of explaining it and it makes me more interested in maths if you know what I mean?

R

Richard Lewis 16:58

Great!

H

Hattie Butterworth 16:59

Cos obviously it's...well not obviously...you know, it's not something I've thought about since GCSE at all.

R

Richard Lewis 17:05

Yeah, GCSE...They ... I don't think they talk about magic when they teach that.

H

Hattie Butterworth 17:10

Not remotely, no. But yeah, goodness, that that really did hit something. I just want to know, what was it maybe about the music world that turned you off? Or did it turn you off? When you were younger? You know, even you've spoken about how, obviously, you could keep music as a hobby but was there a reason other than that, that you thought "no, actually, I'd rather go into maths-y, business things."

R

Richard Lewis 17:40

It wasn't the people. All of my friends at school were musicians, basically. And even at uni, I felt like I had a lot more in common with people who were playing music than people who were doing maths. And then I kind of kept feeling that when I when I was out in the in the real world after after uni. I think, I think maybe this is good to think about in terms of... terms of creativity, because I actually had more of a sense of discovering my own creativity with maths than with music. I think even as simple as just the act of writing down all of the equations and all the steps in solving a math problem, in a way felt more creative than the kinds of musical activities that I was I was used to doing and encouraged to do, even even composing, I think a lot of people around that age when they're kind of teenagers feel this huge weight of tradition. Yeah for sure. You're you're kind of sitting there listening to Bach and Mahler. Mahler was my absolute favourite when I was 17/18. And I'm thinking, "well, what's the point of me trying to top that?" Once you have these masterpieces, that's ...

H

Hattie Butterworth 19:10

Yeah.

R

Richard Lewis 19:12

Why would I even think about writing it? I might as, might as well just try and play it. So I... the high points of that time of my life were things like getting to, getting to play Mahler's Fifth Symphony with with my, my county orchestra, which was just so exciting, such like a sort of dream come true. But yeah, it felt like the important bit of music was the masterpieces that were already there. So the music that had already been played, that you could, if you practised enough, kind of get to experience some of that for yourself.

H

Hattie Butterworth 19:49

Yeah.

R

Richard Lewis 19:50

Yeah, definitely, uh, which was really exciting. I kept on hammering away at the piano trying to trying to learn more of the repertoire, and the clarinet as well, that because that's, that's why I was playing in the orchestras.

H

Hattie Butterworth 20:02

Oh wow!

R

Richard Lewis 20:03

I definitely really enjoyed it, but yeah, it just didn't feel as as creative. It felt like it would, when I did try to write music, and I did, I got a few, a few performances done while I was at school of things I'd written, which was just really cool but the amount of work you had to put in to, to write it all down, and then convince someone to play it, and all of that, and all the while thinking, "but it's not as good as Marler." It was just a bit too... It was just a bit too much I think. Maths felt a lot ... kind of well-defined in terms of a place to create things.

H

Hattie Butterworth 20:40

Yeah, I think ...

R

Richard Lewis 20:41

It felt accessible in a way.

H

Hattie Butterworth 20:43

I think that's so interesting, because you, you know, even though you clearly thought that



maths was therefore the the place to go to, I still think that I've had so many of the same feelings about playing great music, and it's this thing of like, I can, I feel like I sometimes can only be creative up to a point because I can recreate a piece that someone's written, but I still kind of know, it will never be quite as good say as Yo Yo Ma playing it or whatever. And it is, you do have to fight quite hard against that doubt, and say, "Well, no, I do have something special to bring to it." That's so interesting that you felt, in a way sort of more restricted by music, and more freed by maths. And I'm just wondering if you know, your current love of improvising, is that where it broke down the barrier do you think, where you suddenly saw music as something more creative for you?

R

Richard Lewis 21:44

Yeah, I think that's it. I think it sort of happened in two stages, so at uni, maths stopped feeling like a fun place that I could play. It was, it was just really hard. Everyone has their limit with maths. I think most most people have a limit around GCSE level, and then other other people take it a bit further but yeah, it gets really hard. And it was funny when I when I left uni, I just assumed that everyone else kind of had a similar kind of experience. And I had to keep reminding myself that "No, maths is supposed to just be really hard." I suppose having gone through my childhood, just finding all of maths really easy it was it took a bit of getting used to the fact that that yeah, maths does just get a bit a bit crazy. So yeah, I found my limit. And so it stopped being fun, which, yeah, that was, that was a really hard time actually, I think I'd pinned a lot of my hopes and dreams on on being able to just keep enjoying maths forever. But in a way, looking back, I think that was me hiding from from finding my true creative outlet, because after a year I, where i didn't really, I started my consulting work, but I wasn't really doing nearly as much maths as at, as at uni. And I wasn't playing music at all for about a year really. But then after that, when I started trying things out, I, I started, I guess with a bit more of ... I want to say grown up, but I definitely ...still

H

Hattie Butterworth 23:29

Yeah. Yeah.

R

Richard Lewis 23:29

... not grown up with a bit more a bit more life experience, I was looking at music, and thinking, "what am I actually trying to do here? What do I actually love about it? What's the reality? What, what, what are the experiences I'm looking for?" And so I knew it had something to do with playing music and probably writing music as well because I kept on trying to do some of that. I just found myself moving more and more away from writing things down and then there was actually a session I had with someone who improvises a lot, and he just told me to, to, to just make something up on the spot. And I don't think anyone had asked me to do that and no one had literally given me permission to do that before and that was, that was a really big turning point. At that point I, I met a couple of other ... a couple of jazz musicians as well who kind of introduced me to that way of looking at things. And I started listening to more music. I think that was that was the big one because I grew up and I was only really listening to classical music for for a long time. I, I didn't even have to have a pair of headphones until I was like 21 or something crazy. It's very weird, I think because I was listening like every evening and going

to live concerts and I was playing it but I didn't think I had to listen as much. And I wasn't cultivating much curiosity about other music that that I hadn't been introduced to and so I think with maths kind of gone, in a way, I suddenly had this space where I felt this need to, to discover all this music that I hadn't been experiencing before. So, so I just started listening to everything. I think it's an amazing world we're in where you've got Spotify, you can just listen to endless, endless variety of music. There was a moment where I thought back to when I was about 13 and I was showing my mum a piece of music that I'd written. And I was telling her, "it doesn't sound real, it doesn't sound... doesn't sound like it's supposed to." And I think there were two aspects of that I've now realised, kind of 10 years later. One is, there's a huge amount of craft involved if you're speaking a certain language, then in ... kind of go a lot deeper, more reliably, if you've spent the time immersed in, in that language, and in that craft. Just like speaking any spoken language. So that that was that was one thing and so now I'm very focused on which bits of my craft I'm trying to learn about and develop. But the other one that probably the even bigger one for me was this feeling of spontaneity. Someone said that composition is just improvisation in slow motion. And improvisation is just composition but in the moment. And they are the same thing. Because you're trying to create music, which ... music is there and then it's gone. I really, really believe the best music sounds spontaneous.

H

Hattie Butterworth 25:41

Yeah.

R

Richard Lewis 25:41

It's crazy. And so I am still on that vibe. I feel like I've got used to being on that journey now and realising that that's, that's such an important side of it. And and then, knowing that there were places where people would let me improvise, that got me thinking, "do I, do I have to write it down if I write music? Does it have to be written down for it to count?" And that kind of started off a big journey of coming to terms with, with how I saw myself as as an artist, and I realised that I just loved trying to squeeze the artistic process into a moment, into a, into a piece of music. And that's, that's a huge driving force for for all of the practising and all of the all of my creative process really.

H

Hattie Butterworth 28:18

Yeah, definitely. And how long ago was this...the moment that you were allowed to improvise? How long ago was that that you discovered it?

R

Richard Lewis 28:30

Ooh that was I think that was about three years ago.

H

Hattie Butterworth 28:35

Wow. So it's all happened so, so quickly?

R

Richard Lewis 28:39

Yeah, it was ... it was just like, everything had been waiting there for me. I just needed to... Yeah. ... open the door to it.

H

Hattie Butterworth 28:47

Was there any kind of doubt that, you know, there are other people that have been doing this for so many years? And ... Yeah. ...you know, did you have all that kind of?

R

Richard Lewis 28:56

Yeah, that was, that was ... I think that was a big blocker for kind of keeping me doing my day job. Because I thought, "well, the only ... if I want to do music, if I, if I want to share my myself as an artist with the world, then the only path to do that is to go and become Keith Jarrett or go and become Yo Ma or someone," which is not a very good strategy, because there aren't that many of them. There are lots of musicians so yeah, I think it took me a while to come to terms with the fact that there's always luck involved in those kinds of career trajectories. But then if you kind of learn about some of, some of those people as people and starting to learn about their processes and, and things that they struggle with, I was able to see it a lot more as people just, just working with what they had, and really giving their all when they had the opportunity. And so eventually I was able to really commit to being me, rather than being the next Keith Jarrett.

H

Hattie Butterworth 30:20

I love that. I love that. Because who's... there are so many rules, unwritten rules, maybe but all these rules that it feels like we have about the path to becoming a musician, isn't there? And I just love that you've literally smashed that on the head and you've said, "No, I know I have something to give here because I feel alive and so what if I've spent, you know, far many more years to come to that realisation? At least I've come to it now." You know, I think that's so important. Because there could be people that feel the same, but maybe are too scared or think that they've you know, they're stuck, stuck with what they have chosen or whatever. I think that's just, just brilliant. Because I just don't think it's too late. I really, I really don't ever think it's too late if you really are on fire with what you're doing. And it comes from the right place. There has to be a place for you. You know, I really ...

R

Richard Lewis 31:23

Yeah, I think there are there are two key ideas there, there's ... if you didn't know how old you were, that wouldn't stop you playing music.

H

Hattie Butterworth 31:34

Yeah.

R

Richard Lewis 31:36

And, and I think what you said about all those rules being out there in the world is people like to talk about rules and like to think about rules, but there are no rules, only people.

H

Hattie Butterworth 31:47

So true. It's so true. And I mean, your audience isn't going to know how many years of study you've done, you know, if you touch them in the moment with your music...

R

Richard Lewis 31:57

Yeah.

H

Hattie Butterworth 31:57

...They really aren't going to care, I don't think.

R

Richard Lewis 31:59

Yeah.

H

Hattie Butterworth 32:00

You know... but I kind of want to talk now a bit about business and about maybe also your plans for the future and things. I mean, can you explain what your day job actually has been and what you've been doing in the business world at the start and maybe recently?

R

Richard Lewis 32:19

Sure. So I was working for initially a big consultancy firm, and then I went to a smaller one. And so... and we were, we were using technology to help insurance companies. And specifically to help them with some tricky maths problems. And so I got to know a lot about how technology works and, and how businesses work. I think in the smaller one, because it had only started maybe a year before, I got to see how, how that develops firsthand, which is good. I got to know about office politics which they never teach you about and, and I think, I think it was a bit like maths, when I was growing up felt like a kind of safe way to be creative. The nine to five and the consultancy ethos of serving clients gave me a really well-defined space to learn how to help people in a meaningful way, because they ... everyone kind of agrees on the boundaries, so they, you agree a contract for some work, and then you deliver the work and

that's, that's it, everything's very self contained. Either you do the thing you said you do or you didn't. And, and you have all the emails flying around. Yeah, just know that all those dynamics were really important to learn about firsthand, very formative for me, I think it was an important way to transition from loving maths to just wanting to help the people that that I care about.

H Hattie Butterworth 34:12

That's fascinating. So from this, you know, from all the experience you've gained in, you know, working with clients and working with people on, in a kind of office space, and seeing the way that the business world works and everything, I kind of am wondering, is there anything in the music world or that you'd like ... Any advice you'd like to give to people or musicians or anyone you know, in terms of the business side of the classical music world? Is there something you see a lot that you think "Ah, if only people knew this" or "if only people understood that this is what ..." I don't know if I'm making much sense but...

R Richard Lewis 34:51

No, it's a really, it's a really important question and to be honest, I... that's that's what I'm focusing on now...

H Hattie Butterworth 34:57

Yeah.

R Richard Lewis 34:57

... is how to ... how to kind of have have a space where people can learn to be both artists and in business. And because I think traditionally we see it as one or the other.

H Hattie Butterworth 35:16

For sure.

R Richard Lewis 35:18

And so... maybe a good place to start is that, is that everyone's in the human connection, business, really. Musicians, painters, brokers, consultants, everyone's in the human connection business. And in the business world, people have agreed certain boundaries. And there's probably a lot of technical or domain specific knowledge or skills that are expected of you, depending on on what you're doing, but but deep down everyone, everyone's just trying to help other people. And, and then I think it's, it's the same with artists really, in that you're trying to get that connection and, and help people on on a different level, by by making art. And so I think, realising that there is that similarity underneath it all, is a really good first step.

H

Hattie Butterworth 36:32

Yeah. Wow. And, you know, in terms of what your kind of plans are for translating this business structure, and this whole kind of ethos, what ... can you tell us sort of about what your plans are for the future and what you have coming up in terms of your music and all of that?

R

Richard Lewis 36:55

Sure, so I'm working pretty much full-time now on, on designing and building a community to connect artists and people in the business world, well, creative people in the business world. And so to do that, I'm spending the next few weeks just writing down all of these ideas I've been having, and I kind of made a start on my on my blog, during lockdown. But now that I'm really clear about who I want to help, I'm able to put together lots of resources. So I'll be ... I love doing videos as well, so that there'll be some of those coming up. And, and then the idea is, once I've kind of got some of that on paper, and once I'm talking about it, once I'm used to talking about it, then I'm, I'll be doing quite quite a big launch on on the first of November. And so from, during October I'll be I'll be looking for people who who are dreaming about being more creative, but feeling like the business world doesn't agree. And so that that's going to be the focus after I've started writing down ... well... after put together all of these ideas with all the time I now have. And then the dream is that we'll have their space where we can share different perspectives, different experiences, different ways of making art, and and find the the human connection underneath it.

H

Hattie Butterworth 38:41

That sounds just exactly what we need to be honest. It sounds great. Can you give an example of the sort of ideas you have and the sorts of things you want to share with people and ways in which you want people to connect business and art? And can you give an example of something that you that you're writing about or...?

R

Richard Lewis 39:05

Definitely, there's a connection I've noticed between constraints in the business world and improvisation. And so it was kind of two books that I'd read that fired this off. There was a big, quite a new business book that that it's called A Beautiful Constraint, and it's I just think it's, it says lots of very important things about the way the world works with scarcity and abundance. And the idea there is that you make progress by asking seemingly impossible questions. So you end up ... you start off feeling like you're in a double bind, and then you have to invent your way out of it by changing some assumptions or looking at things in a different way. And that's kind of an imperative for most businesses now. So that... that's something I'd really like to translate in a way that the artists could understand. And meanwhile, from the other end of the spectrum, really enjoyed reading The Art of Is by by Stephen Nachmanovitch, who's one of the ... one of the very best writers out there on improvisation. And his, his mentor, Gregory Bateson, who was a very, very interesting guy, there's very ... he, he posed a lot of riddles, I think he looked at the world in a very, very spiritual way, really, and, and one of the things he

was really interested in was the concept of the double bind. And I just found it striking that there was this this guy, this was maybe 30/40 years ago, who said, the double bind is super important, for progress, and for change, and all of that stuff. And then you have these guys five years ago, writing a book about it. And I thought, there must be more things out there, like that, that I can write about and kind of draw those connections together for people. So I kind of see myself as a, as a translator, as an interpreter, between the two worlds.

H

Hattie Butterworth 41:38

Yeah, because you've seen what works and what doesn't work in the business world. And you've seen the, you know, the ways in which clients respond to certain things, and the things that work in terms of, yeah, in terms of structure and everything, and I think a lot of those things, musicians aren't really taught to understand, you know, and I'm also interested that there seems to be a spiritual side of the business world that I didn't really know existed!

R

Richard Lewis 42:05

Well that, that's the thing! The business world is... you can't really get away with sounding spiritual. So you have to wait for, wait for things to be packaged up in a way that, that sounds sounds like, sounds a bit more real, bit more down-to-earth.

H

Hattie Butterworth 42:23

Yeah.

R

Richard Lewis 42:24

But I really think that lots of the ideas that are driving change in the business world are really old ideas. And they're....they are kind of spiritual ideas, I...One of my passions is, is reading ancient Chinese philosophy. And there's just, there's so much great stuff in there that comes up in different ways over and over again, throughout history and so ... but I think the key is that it's all very well and good having a cool idea whether it's a spiritual idea, or a business idea. But the work, so what you actually spend your time doing, and what you put your energy into, is usually a some kind of translation process, or some kind of compromise between the ideal that you can see, and how the world is actually working right now.

H

Hattie Butterworth 43:24

Yeah.

R

Richard Lewis 43:25

And I think the hardest bit for me, the last few weeks has been shifting to allowing myself to be driven by what the world needs right now, instead of what, what I want to just tell everyone

about so yeah, kind of seeing myself as serving a certain group of people and communicating ideas that I think are important for them in a language that they'll understand and that they will believe.

H

Hattie Butterworth 43:59

Wow, that's so great. So if someone wants to find out more about what you do is your your blog, I'm guessing is able to be read by people.

R

Richard Lewis 44:09

Yeah!

H

Hattie Butterworth 44:10

How do people read read about your ideas and things?

R

Richard Lewis 44:15

Yeah, so at the moment, I've, I've got quite a lot of blogs on there -blog posts. So that's, that's richardadamlewis.com. And also on there, you've got a few recordings of my piano music, if you're interested in that in that side of it and... Not that the two are related really, I... Yeah, I ... Well, I think some of the writing is is more geared towards music on, on the blog. So yeah, definitely worth checking out if you've got some musical background and and I'm on Instagram as well. And where else am I? Yeah, I think the website is probably the best place but as I say, I'm kind of deep in designing and building the next few weeks so there'll be there'll be plenty more and if, if people want to kind of join as soon as they can, I've already got kind of a handful of people in the community, if you want to get in there before, before, it all kicks off on first November.

H

Hattie Butterworth 45:17

Yeah.

R

Richard Lewis 45:17

Then, really keen for people to get in touch with me at richard@richardadamlewis.com And I'm just really keen to hear about what creativity people dream about, and what experiences they could bring to this kind of community.

H

Hattie Butterworth 45:38

Yeah, so is there a is there a sort of certain type of musician or person that you're specifically



trying to talk to...or...? Who, who exactly do you think you want your audience to be, or...?

**R** Richard Lewis 45:51

So, so it's, it's people who dream of being more creative but feel like they can't, because, because of the business world because of having to earn money or...Yeah, feeling some other pressures. Some sort of external pressures that seem to be blocking them from, from expressing themselves creatively.

**H** Hattie Butterworth 46:25

Fabulous. Yes, because, I mean, it's always a worry, isn't it becoming a musician and putting your heart into it? Because I mean, one of the first things a lot of people will respond with when you tell them, what you want to do is, "oh, well, there's no money in that."

**R** Richard Lewis 46:42

As if people have have decided long ago, what money is for and what it isn't.

**H** Hattie Butterworth 46:47

Yeah.

**R** Richard Lewis 46:48

It's ... yeah.

**H** Hattie Butterworth 46:49

I mean, I'm interpreting what you're saying is, you want to give people confidence that there is ... there are opportunities for them to become whatever they want to be and have the financial side also.

**R** Richard Lewis 47:04

Yeah, this is this, this is it that ... the idea that you can be whoever you want to be, is, is very true, in the strongest sense, and that you, once you know, what you want to do, there will be a way to make that work. And of course, there will be some compromise, but your, once you found it, you really can become the person that you want to be and, and it's, it can be hard, but but I just deeply believe that's, that's there for, for everyone who's who's able to see it.

**H** Hattie Butterworth 47:11

H HATTIE BUTTERWORTH 47:44

Yeah, so I'm just kind of talking on quite basic terms, I mean, if someone does want to set up a business, however sort of small that might be, so you know, maybe a teaching business or online resources or trying to think of other classical music and sort of business-y things...

R Richard Lewis 48:05

Yeah.

H Hattie Butterworth 48:07

What do you think is the first step of going about something like that? What would be your biggest piece of advice for setting up a business alongside either being a performer or anything like that?

R Richard Lewis 48:20

The first step is to be super clear about what you dream about. What gets you out of bed in the morning, because if you, if you're not clear about that, and you try to do something else, then it's going to be a lot harder. And the second step, which has to happen very soon after that, so you don't kind of get carried away is to look at the world as it is now and choose your minimum viable audience, choose the people out there you're going to help. And then everything you do after that, so how you structure your lessons or, or where you put your resources, what channels you use to talk to people, everything should be geared towards how you can help those people. And the more time you can spend at the beginning, getting inside their head, and really empathising with them, the better, and that will that will really pay off when you actually get into the detail of doing it. So if you do have a bit of time to to get it off the ground in that way, then then that's that's a really good way to kick things off.

H Hattie Butterworth 49:34

I, yeah, I just, maybe because I'm naive and terribly cynical, but I just, I'm just so kind of struck by how holistically you want to talk about business and how your main motive is helping people and I can't pretend that's always how I've seen the business world, you know, it feels it's so much about exploitation and stuff and yeah...

R Richard Lewis 49:58

Yeah there's ...there is a lot of that still, there's there's a lot of a lot of people out there and a lot of things out there which, which are really not nice and ...

H Hattie Butterworth 50:11

Yeah.

**R** Richard Lewis 50:12  
...kind of really not something that sort of unselfish people want want to be part of.

**H** Hattie Butterworth 50:20  
Yeah, that's what you hear about as well.

**R** Richard Lewis 50:22  
Yeah, that well, that's what you see on the news, and especially from the outside, if you're seeing it as something that's other, it's very easy to get that impression. And so it is still there. If you, if you want to work for a bank, then depending on the bank, it can be pretty horrible.

**H** Hattie Butterworth 50:40  
Yeah.

**R** Richard Lewis 50:42  
But I think more and more, partly because of the kind of the way the sharing economy has massively exploded in all the different sectors, you have to make some kind of human connection to stand a chance. Otherwise, it's a race to the bottom, otherwise, you just kind of put your new music book on Amazon, and you have to price it at like, half the price of all the other competitors just to get people to buy it, and then people buy it but you don't make a profit. So you can still do that, if you want to. But people are kind of collectively quite fed up with that. And there will be people out there who are looking for a new connection that you can offer. And as as an artist, as a musician, you have so much to offer in that regard, because you've spent so much time thinking about music and thinking about emotions, and all the things that actually touch people on a on a deeper level. And so you kind of you know how that works, even if you haven't thought about it in terms of "how do I monetize it?" You do actually, you're quite familiar with those emotions, I guess the the jump is to serve specific people, as opposed to serving music in general.

**H** Hattie Butterworth 52:18  
Yeah.

**R** Richard Lewis 52:18  
Because I would say an artist is there to serve art. And someone in business is there to serve the people they've chosen to serve. And that can be a bit disorientating, because people are

very messy. And they won't tell you what they really believe a lot of the time. They'll contradict themselves, and they don't make your lives, your life easy. But that's kind of the whole point, it means that there are loads of opportunities there to show up with something surprising, something remarkable that people will tell their friends about. And then then you're, then you're onto something at that point.

H

Hattie Butterworth 53:00

You've just given us so much confidence as musicians. It's incredible. I love it.

R

Richard Lewis 53:07

I have to, I have to say it's, I love talking about it. But behind it, there's there's a lot of hard work that goes into it. And I would say musicians, and all artists in general are also very good at putting in the hours. And being self-disciplined, and being able to work on your own in a in a room at a desk, doing the hard work. And I think there's there's a lot of demand for that kind of, that kind of work. Now, it's just a case of really finding the people you want to do that work for. And then, and then just really, really going for it and it is tough. I'm definitely... that's been a big ... that's been the difficult bit of the roller coaster so far, the last few weeks, just kind of just ... Yeah, being there on my own, trying not to pay the piano too much when I have all these ideas that I want to share with people, and just kind of get on with it and do the hard work

H

Hattie Butterworth 54:16

And realising how much time it really takes to to put a vision into practice. But I mean, yeah, I can't tell you how excited I am for you and excited that you, you took what must have felt like a huge risk to then, you know, share your gifts in this way and to talk to musicians in a way that we aren't often spoken to. And yeah, it's just so exciting for me that you're doing this, and I'm so behind you and I can't wait to see what happens.

R

Richard Lewis 54:48

Great. Me too.

H

Hattie Butterworth 54:49

Yeah, it's gonna be so cool.

R

Richard Lewis 54:52

Thanks so much.

H

Hattie Butterworth 54:53

H Hattie Butterworth 54:55

No is fine. Is there any any final words any final bits of advice or Anything you'd like to end with saying?

R Richard Lewis 55:03

I think it was something I said earlier, which just, just feels like it sums it all up really there. There are no rules, only people and find the people you care about and work really hard for them. And you'll be okay. That's that's kind of the the message, I think at the moment.

H Hattie Butterworth 55:28

Thank you so much for saying that. And I think we, yeah, we need to hear that at the moment for sure. But it's been an absolute pleasure to talk to you Richard, thank you so much to talking to us.

R Richard Lewis 55:39

You too! Thanks so much for having me.