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## Clair de lune by light of day in sunny Townsville

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By [Piers Lane](#) on Jul 6, 2012 (4 days ago) filed under [Classical Music](#) | [Comments](#)

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### This year's festival pays tribute to a French Impressionist composer and a local painter.

I'm sitting on a plane awaiting takeoff from sunny Perth for a couple of days in Melbourne. I'll be staying with my long-suffering friends Di and Lino Bresciani (who regularly put up with me practising until all hours) and catching up on laundry and emails in between concerts and hotels.



I was last there in March, when they hosted the 2012 Melbourne Launch of the [Australian Festival of Chamber Music](#). Di has an exceptional ability to mount successful fundraisers, not only for her own Youth Music Foundation Australia, but also for many other worthy organisations. I think I've played about 26 concerts in her home over the years.

I've always loved her Steinway, but the other thing I love is that her house is full of glowing paintings, many of them her own (pictured *San Remo 5*), in various stages of preparation. I doubt there could be many musicians or artists with such an intimate knowledge of both disciplines, so it's a coup for us to present her exhibition *Rhythms of Light*, exploring concepts common to both artforms, at the Perc Tucker Gallery in Townsville before, during and after the Festival this year. I'll also have the honour of launching her new book on the first Saturday of the festival.

### Piers Lane

Australian-born, London-based pianist Piers Lane reflects on the ins and outs of directing the Australian Festival of Chamber Music in Townsville.

*Now we're taxiing out to the runway...*

It's been a perfect start to my current tour in Oz. I arrived from London on Wednesday and spent a few days staying with *more* long-suffering friends, Mark Coughlan and Pei-Yin Hsu, who also allow me access to their piano at any time of day or night. Davis, their dog, does his best to ensure I don't become too self-centred about it all! I played a recital at Perth's elegant Government House Ballroom (designed by Percy Grainger's father all those years ago) on the pearly and colourful Fazioli instrument I was privileged to inaugurate three years ago. It was the same program I'll play during August in Geelong, Brisbane, Armidale and Sydney's Angel Place, and begins with Debussy, whose music will feature so prominently in Townsville this year.

### Keywords

festival

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This year is the sesquicentenary of Debussy's birth, and he's worth everything we can do in his memory – one of the truly seminal composers from last century. Last week, before I left London, I spent hours on the computer writing the script for our Sunday afternoon event celebrating Debussy's life and loves – inevitably, it was entitled *Clair de Lune*! His life was surprising in many ways. How many composers can admit to **two lovers attempting to shoot themselves** when he left them?

*We're now streaking through blue skies...*

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Having lived for so long with London's low, usually chalky horizon, it's too easy to forget just how clear and blue and vivid Aussie skies can be. Carl Vine, in the last movement of his new Piano Concerto, which I'll premiere in Sydney in August, has a third movement called *Cloudless Blue* – I know just what he means! And we'll have those cloudless blue skies in Townsville later this month when the Festival kicks off. My hotel room will look across to Magnetic Island on one side, and on the other down to the marina with its myriad of bobbing boats. Roll on, last week of July! Meantime, there are some new Festival issues raising their heads and requiring immediate sorting. I'll tell you about them next blog.

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I agree with you: Me permito escribir en español transcribiendo un fragmento de un mail que me mandara Claudio von Foerster: ".....decidí practicar el juego de elegir, que no es otra cosa que el...

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Having a limited number for a list like this will always create challenges, and the title is inaccurate: these are all pianists who made recordings that are commercially available. Many of the...

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Sorry that the Australian pianist, Bruce Hungerford (1922-1977), is not on the list. He did not have as big a career as he deserved, but was a fantastic Beethoven, Schubert and Chopin pianist, and...

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'Ten pianists that have influenced my musical life' might have been preferable. Van Cliburn, Barenboim, Leif Ove Andsnes, are a few that I would include.

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I find these kinds of lists very frustrating. Such judgements are inevitably subjective. Great pianists is fine, greatest pianists is annoying and greatest of all time is just plain silly....

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