



Ji, pianist

People

The Real Star of the Grammys Was Ji, the Pianist from That Android Commercial

Alex Heigl | *People.com* | February 16, 2016



A new Android commercial that aired during the Grammys has Twitter and the show's audience at home asking one thing: "Who's that piano player?"

Finally, we have an answer for you: Ji-Yong Kim.

The commercial features Ji playing two pianos, one of which has been tuned entirely to middle C. It's sort of a high-concept jab at Apple and tied to Android's slogan of "Be together, not the same." But honestly, about the only thing that matters is Ji's high-speed rendition of the third movement of Beethoven's "Moonlight Sonata."

In a brief "making of" clip about the commercial, Ji explains that he's been playing piano since he was five, and professionally for 15 years. (It's not hard to see why.)

Tuesday, a friend of Ji's tweeted at us, providing enough detail (his name, mostly) to do some Google-Fu. One thing Ji doesn't mention in the commercial? The fact that, at 10, he became the youngest person ever to win the prestigious New York Philharmonic's Young Artists Competition. Below, a little more background:

"My mom is a singer," Ji explained in an interview with Johns Hopkins. "And when I was growing up, she had sort a music school in Korea. I was raised with pianos all around me, and with my mom singing all the time. She taught violin, piano, voice, the works. My mom found me playing piano by ear one day, and she decided to get me started."

Ji is also something of a star in his native South Korea, having worked with famous Korean pop artist Tae Jung Kim to design a piano that would let him perform "guerrilla" performances on the streets of Seoul. He also performed the country's first outdoor classical concert as soloist with the BBC Symphony.

All that, and you couldn't give us his last name during the commercial, Android? Next time, we'll just ask Siri.