



Chris Donnelly

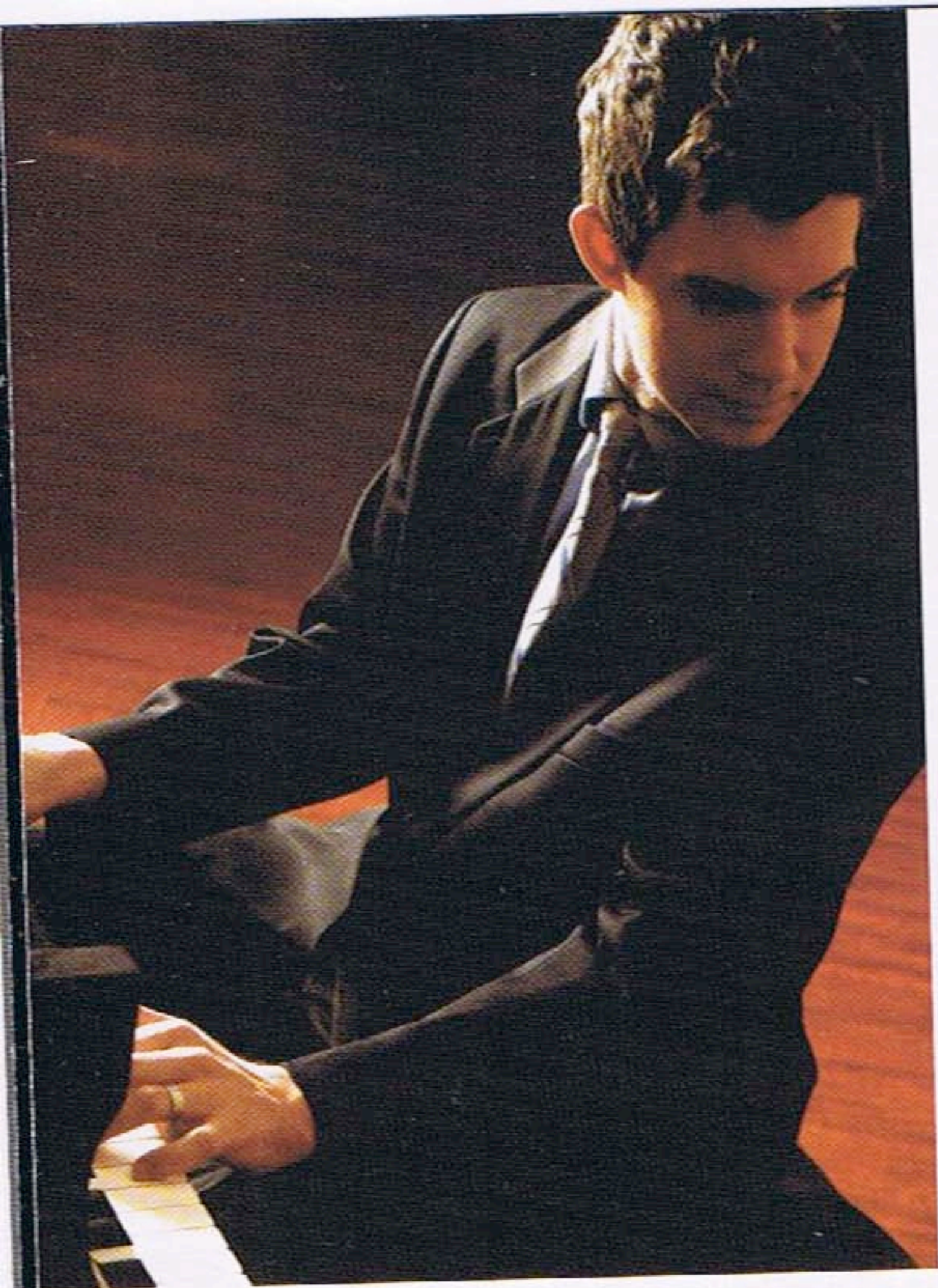
As I open the door to the Starbucks at the corner of King and Yonge, I'm met with a sudden crescendo of voices that presents itself in stark contrast to the F sharps and B flats of the traffic noise on the street. Fitting, considering I am meeting with Chris Donnelly, an Etobicoke jazz pianist who was recently nominated for a Juno for his debut album entitled 'Solo'. A book I found him reading, *Quintet of the Year*, is proof that his love of music transcends his ability to make a living with it.

When Chris comes back to the table with our upscale specialty coffee he begins to tell me about the path that lead him to the Juno Awards. An Etobicoke boy born and raised, Chris' musical education began when

he was two and a half years old. His Parents enrolled him at the Humber College Community Music School, where he learned improvisation through experimenting with different musical mediums.

An avid member of the sports community Chris played baseball in the Martingrove Baseball League as well as hockey with the Humber Valley Hockey Association. These pastimes were sacrificed with his move to Toronto in August of 2003, in exchange for "a broader spectrum of history, culture and architecture which, to an artist, is important to surround yourself with."

At the end of this month Chris will be traveling to another bustling metropolitan city, Vancouver, for the 2009



Juno Awards. When I ask how he feels about the Junos, Chris replies that he is "very excited and happy that people are appreciative of my music" but makes it clear that the Junos won't make anything easier in terms of his career. "I will still have to be pushing, writing, promoting, knocking on doors to uncover opportunities. I want to know that at the end of it all, everything I've done has been at my own hands."

At 26 years old Chris Donnelly has been called "a brilliantly gifted improviser," and the future only looks brighter, from Etobicoke to Juno the only direction in which Chris is headed is to the top.