

## ***Making a legendary artist into a teacher: Using the pianistic art of Dinu Lipatti (1917-1950) to find my own voice***

I aim at an artistic statement about how a performer negotiates their relationship to tradition. Musicians tend to refer only suggestively to their relationships with recordings: for example, 'Horowitz is my role model.' 'Horowitz is my hero.' Yet real connection with the performance of music from the past is not apparent in their work and does not seem to affect their working method. Perhaps a comparison could be: London is beautiful. But merely walking past the houses and shops in London streets cannot be considered the same as living in London, caring emotionally and negotiating daily challenges of living in London. To me, Lipatti is a 'real presence,' critical and alive beyond what publicity materials of performers sometimes call their lineage, and I would like to share that with you.

This PhD project may seem similar to Anna Scott's Brahms's project<sup>1</sup>, except that Scott focuses on reproducing how Ilona Eibenschütz or Adelina de Lara played Brahms note to note. However, my project does not explore the premise of straight imitation, nor is it my intention to place history in the centre. Rather my project intends to use Lipatti as a tool to find my own voice. Pure imitation which Scott adopted is not relevant to my project because it is not my aim to recreate the past nor assume that all features of a teacher will take root in a pupil. I am aware of the different temperaments and natural facilities between myself and Lipatti, and I do not want to risk studying something that would be unhealthy for me. Rather, I aim to be aware of the danger of engaging with historical figures.

What is Lipatti? There are no film materials of Lipatti, and only some recordings and pictures. Lipatti died young, and he instantly became a myth at one level. The way Nadia Boulanger, Poulenc and Menuhin described Lipatti as a saint is one aspect where the personal is conflated with the artistic. Another aspect where the myth takes a life of its own can be seen in the scandal of EMI's 1966 issue of Chopin's *Piano Concerto no. 1*, described by them as a 'document of rare value' when in fact the recording was misattributed. Lipatti was not the soloist, in fact it was Halina Czerny-Stefanska. It's as if, once we have the sense of what Lipatti's aesthetic quality is, what we admire about Lipatti, we imagine it's there even if we are not entirely sure that we are seeing it. Perhaps *the thing we imagine him to be is almost more important than what he is*.

I start out with the reality of questions that emerged from my artistic or personal needs and the fact that I had to find tools for myself. What is helpful for my playing addressing my natural pianism is Lipatti's evenness at phrase endings, and his technique that gives the sound its proper length and substance. As Hebert Von Karajan expresses it, 'no longer piano playing, it was music, released from all earthly weight, music in its purest form, in a harmony.' I think Lipatti is my ideal teacher.

Picasso went to Velázquez so he could make his own *Meninas*. It is with a similar attitude that I use Lipatti to find my path. I divided my work into exploration 'outwards,' including interviews (with Lipatti experts and people with special access to Lipatti material) and exploration 'inwards,' i.e., my own exploration at the piano of my relationship with Lipatti legacy. I realized thinking Lipatti as the central reference point becomes a way of understanding other historical figures and teachers, and that my real journey is navigating, finding my own place relative to that world. In this 20-minutes recital, I will perform Bach *Tocatta in G Major*, Chopin *Etude Op. 10 No. 8* and *Choral et Variations* from Dutilleux's *Piano Sonata*, inspired by the art of Dinu Lipatti.

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<sup>1</sup> Anna Scott, "Romanticizing Brahms: early recordings and the reconstruction of Brahmsian identity" (PhD diss., Leiden University, 2014)



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Taiwanese pianist Bella Tang's musical journey has taken her to concert venues across the globe, from the Taipei National Concert Hall to Wigmore Hall in London. A top prize winner of international competitions, she is the guest artist at the University of Leeds held with the Leeds International Piano Competition, the NTUE International Piano Festival, and Kawai's 50th Anniversary Festival.

Bella studied at the Yehudi Menuhin School in the UK, and with Christopher Elton at the Royal Academy of Music in London, where she won the Full Scholarship Award and the Lloyd Hartley Prize. She recently presented at the Sibelius Academy Symposium and performed the Prokofiev Third Piano Concerto with the Ealing Symphony Orchestra as the Concerto Award winner at St Barnabas, London. Among Bella's many prizes, she was the recipient of the Craxton Memorial Postgraduate Award, the Help Musicians UK Ian Fleming Award, and the 2021 Taiwan Government Scholarship Award.

**Relevant video recording of the performer:**

<https://youtu.be/5BaEEnVU7k0>