

RISING STAR GREAT ARTISTS OF TOMORROW

DI XIAO
Pianist

Set to begin a prestigious tour of Europe, the Chinese pianist tells how her first musical journeys were a bit more humble.

EUROPEAN AMBITION:
'My wish is to be some sort of ambassador between two cultures'



IT'S A TOUCHING SCENE from 1980s Guangzhou (Canton) that Di Xiao describes: a devoted father, who has sold his motorbike so that he can buy his talented daughter a piano, carries her on his bicycle through the pouring rain to her lessons on the far side of town. But then comes the explanation for the journey: 'Actually, it was because I'd rebelled against my first teacher when I was just four. She was an old lady who was a neighbour. But I scratched the piano with a knife and left some chewing gum on her seat when she came to teach me, so she didn't come any more. And anyway, the ride was good exercise for my father!'

'I'm always happy to play Western music, but I'm Chinese and very proud of it'

Thankfully, lessons after that proved gum-free, and a musical education at conservatoires in Guangzhou, Odessa, Beijing and, finally, Birmingham followed. It is the last of these cities that Di, 28, now calls home, having been chosen by the Symphony Hall as its representative in the European Concert Hall Organisation (ECHO) Rising Stars scheme – a position that will see her take on a solo recital tour of major concert

venues in cities including the Megaron in Athens and the Amsterdam Concertgebouw. Her concerts, she says, will feature a range of music: 'A good concert includes three types of music: repertoire that people already know, repertoire that people want to know, and repertoire that people should know. In future, for instance, I'd like to put some Chinese music in my concerts.'

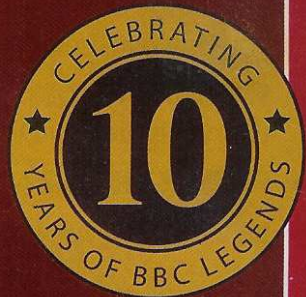
In fact, adds Di, contemporary Chinese works such as by Tan Dun or Chen Qigang are something that she's particularly keen to champion: 'I'm always happy to play Western music, because the piano is an invention of Western countries. However, I'm Chinese and very proud of it. I want people to learn more about my country – my wish is to be some sort of ambassador between two cultures.'

Cue the ECHO tour. One presumes that Di Xiao will not be completing it by bicycle. *Interview by Jeremy Pound*

Di Xiao begins her ECHO Rising Star tour at Birmingham Town Hall on 26 October. See www.thsh.co.uk

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JACQUELINE DU PRÉ
Elgar Cello Concerto (1964)
Priault Rainier Cello Concerto (1964)
Rubbra Cello Sonata in G minor (1962)*

BBC Symphony Orchestra
Sir Malcolm Sargent · Norman del Mar · Iris du Pré*



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SVIATOSLAV RICHTER
Haydn Piano Sonata No.44
Prokofiev Piano Sonatas Nos.2 & 8
Légende, Op.12 No.6
10 Visions Fugitives, Op.22

No.6



GÉZA ANDA
Mozart Piano Concertos Nos.16 & 17
Bartók Piano Concerto No.2 (1973)*

English Chamber Orchestra
BBC Symphony Orchestra*
Pierre Boulez*



CARLO MARIA GIULINI
Brahms Ein deutsches Requiem (1978)

Ileana Cotrubas · Dietrich Fischer-Dieskau
Edinburgh International Festival Chorus
London Philharmonic Orchestra



KURT SANDERLING
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