



(RE) inventio

1. (ré)inventio 1 in C major	01:54
2. (ré)inventio 2 in C minor	02:42
3. (ré)inventio 3 in D major	01:12
4. (ré)inventio 4 in D minor	01:23
5. (ré)inventio 5 in E flat major	01:28
6. (ré)inventio 6 in E major	03:10
7. (ré)inventio 10 in G major	01:20
8. (ré)inventio 11 in G minor	01:10
9. (ré)inventio 9 in F minor	02:09
10. (ré)inventio 12 in A major	03:45
11. (ré)inventio 13 in A minor	01:35
12. (ré)inventio 14 in B flat major	01:21
13. (ré)inventio 15 in B minor	01:53
14. (ré)inventio 7 in E minor	01:50
15. (ré)inventio 8 in F major	01:13
Total playing time	28:12



Yulia Vershinina-Mukhopadhyay, piano
Chiahu Lee, piano

Recorded at the Carole Nash recital room,
Royal Northern College of Music, February 2023

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Produced by Yulia Vershinina-Mukhopadhyay,
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All music arranged by Chiahu Lee

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The pianists met during their studies at the Royal Northern College of Music in Manchester and their enduring friendship has set the ground for an exciting musical partnership. The Duo Vershinina/Lee debuted with Rheinberger's arrangement of Bach's Goldberg Variations for two pianos. They performed this opus in various concert venues in the UK and Luxembourg, including the Philharmonie in 2019, cementing their mutual fascination with Bach's music.

The idea of 'variation' has since been a red thread throughout their projects and led both women to constantly seek inspiration outside the conventional repertoire for two pianos. In fact, the duo has made it their aspiration to spread the word about lesser-known compositions and even write and arrange their own music.

In their recent Actart Concert at the Conservatoire de la Ville de Luxembourg, Yulia and Chia-Chia focused on works composed in the last 20 years by contemporary women composers.



I would have never thought that a simple word play, a mere attempt of creating something fun, would lead me to a whole journey of personal *reinvention*. Nurtured and smothered by the institution of classical music, this project unconsciously turned out to be an attempt of taking one foot through that cracked door. Realising this now and listening back to all of the (ré)inventions, it is probably not a coincidence that this whole thing turned out to be a melting pot of different musical ideas my ears had taken a liking to inside and outside of classical music.

It was never planned to be all 15 of them. In fact, Yulia and I needed a fitting encore piece after playing the hour-long Goldberg Variations (arranged by Rheinberger). Wouldn't it be amusing to play an arrangement of the two-part invention no. 8, a staple in every piano beginner's repertoire, after performing the other most popular work by Bach?



To name them '(ré)inventions' was obvious. But for the twisting title (*(ré)inventions à deux pianos* instead of the French title of Bach's inventions à deux voix to work, all 15 had to be... reinvented. After two years of touch-and-goes and many words of encouragement from Yulia, there was finally enough courage to bring this project to the public.

It is thanks to the generous support of fonds stART-up and their belief in this project that allowed my sound waves to travel to other helping hands, making this project not only about my personal reinvention but also about a subject close to my heart: collaborating with women artists. The most beautiful and unexpected outcome might be that through my desire to empower others, I felt encouraged and empowered myself in the end.

Chia-Chia





I remember fondly when I first discovered the repertoire for two pianos during my teenage years. Besides escaping the solitude in the practice room and avoiding the awkward sitting positions in four hands piano playing, I have always associated the two piano repertoire with immense fun. These (ré)inventions are certainly an ode to these joyful memories.

A lot of the inspiration came from my love for electronic music. Besides the percussive elements, I truly enjoy the textures that emerge through layering different sound colours and effects. For most of the (ré)inventions I had a texture in mind that I wanted to create.

Specifically in no. 2, I was inspired by the atmosphere so often found in the second movements of Bach's keyboard concertos, a magical pearl-like sound of the soloist's playing on top of a subdued orchestral accompaniment.

Then there were ingredients that just could not escape the paper even if I tried to, like my unfulfilled desire to be able to play jazz and my life-long love for Baroque music, especially the concerto element. One challenge I wanted to set myself was to explore the instrumentation in its full range, to use all registers of the piano and experiment with Bach's polyphony in a fun interplay.

Chia-Chia

The two-part inventions, these 15 simple pieces, are filled with a true sense of nostalgia for most pianists. In our childhood, they were our doorway into Bach's music. You open the decrepit score and see your favourite one that even after all these years you can still play by heart, the challenging one with articulation markings in red from your exasperated teacher, the one that you started learning but never really finished, each bringing back memories of struggles and accomplishments past.

And beside this flimsy book, there is a new one, the one you purchased yourself as you started teaching those to your own students. It is neat and clean as if the score was saying

"anything is possible once you let your imagination flow". You look at each invention and hear a medley of your pupils' interpretations. You hear those odd accents, clumsy tempo changes, tricky corners where most of them trip over.

And then comes, something no pianist expects... a third encounter with those pieces as you get to rediscover this music and its possibilities through Chia-Chia's (ré)inventions.

Working on (ré)inventions with Chia-Chia felt in many ways like being in an alchemist's lab. There was a constant sense of growth and transformation. The music took a life of its own, once it moved from the score

into our fingers, as if it was reinventing itself through the process of being rehearsed and performed.

For me this work is a testament to Chia-Chia's creativity and open mindedness as a musician. All the way through, she had this unique threefold role: composer, performer and chamber-musician and she showed flexibility and ingenuity in all three. I still do not quite know how Chia-Chia managed to imagine those different sound worlds for each of these seemingly unyielding Baroque pieces. But I certainly cannot unhear it now and on occasion get surprised when my students play the

originals in class and I suddenly do not hear the colourful dissonance, playful rhythm or swaying articulation that Chia-Chia so skilfully added.

Yulia

Chia-Chia

Born in Luxembourg, Chiahu Lee's (also known as Chia-Chia) upbringing has been greatly influenced by a cultural fusion of the Orient and Occident under the loving and artistic wings of her mother.

Besides performing and teaching the piano at the Conservatoire de la Ville de Luxembourg, Chia-Chia is an autodidact in photography and design, and enjoys combining her skills at the award-winning non profit organisation Fingertips ASBL.

Chia-Chia has in her musical endeavours always been driven by a deep sense of social conscience which have led to projects such as 'Medtness' (touring the UK performing the

lesser known works by Nikolai Medtner), 'Festreeval' (a charity festival connecting music composed in the form of variations with biodiversity) and 'Goldberg by 32 pianists – a variation a day keeps the doctor away' (a solidarity initiative launched during the worldwide lockdown).

Most recently, Chia-Chia initiated a pedagogical project about creating a tandem between the students of the composition and piano department at the Conservatoire, encouraging the composition students to write in a contemporary style and offering the piano students a different approach to contemporary music.

Yulia

Yulia Vershinina-Mukhopadhyay was born in Russia, raised in Belgium and trained as a musician in the United Kingdom. A child of multiculturalism, Yulia draws her musical inspiration from different pianistic schools.

From her earliest concerts at the Royal Brussels Conservatoire to her Carnegie Hall debut, Yulia always yearned to be on stage: immersing herself in the sounds of the instrument and having the chance to communicate with people through music.

Yulia has been fortunate to collaborate with outstanding musicians. She has performed Brahms' Horn Trio alongside

Peter Cropper, participated in eye-opening residential courses with her former ensemble Trio Mise-en-Scène and is now expanding her horizons discovering new repertoire through her partnership with Chiahui Lee.

A believer in the transcendental power of music and its ability to help us feel more empathy and embrace our shared humanity, Yulia feels that in our increasingly polarised world, music is the key to a kinder and fairer society.

We would like to take this opportunity to thank all the people who collaborated with us, inspired us and supported us while we were working on this project.

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Scores available at www.chiahulee.com

