

# Lai Ping Lee's spiritual journey in India

By JATIN NAIK

TORONTO—Travelling Inward portrays the real life experience of a Chinese-Canadian woman's spiritual journey in India. Lai Ping Lee went to India in 2008 and was inspired to write a book about her 100 days of adventure. She describes the experience as an "inward journey to self-awareness."

The book recounts Lai Ping's day-to-day interactions with the people of India. Through her encounters with the locals, she discovered life's purpose in the most surprising ways.

"Typically, when individuals travel to another country, they tour well-known landmarks," she said at a recent book launch in Toronto. "But I dreamed to have a different kind of experience—a spiritual one—by getting out of my comfort zone and expanding myself."

Lai Ping signed copies of her book, spoke of the spiritual insights she experienced, and encouraged people to look inward.

"Landing in New Delhi, initially I faced many difficulties and hurdles—so many so that I was tempted to go back to Canada," she said. "But I decided to hold

on to my faith, stay committed to my dreams. It turned out I met many wonderful people and they welcomed me with open arms, going out of their way to ensure that I had a safe and a memorable journey."

Travelling Inward tells the story of Lai Ping's inner journey. She felt it was her calling to share the compassion and the love of the common people she met. Inspired by her travels she started a project called Do You Dare? ([www.doyoudare.ca](http://www.doyoudare.ca)) where she challenges individuals to live up to their dreams.

"I want people to read my book

and be challenged to achieve the impossible," she said. "It is important for me to help others realize that they have the ability to achieve their dreams as well. Life is not about me, it is about being a blessing to others."

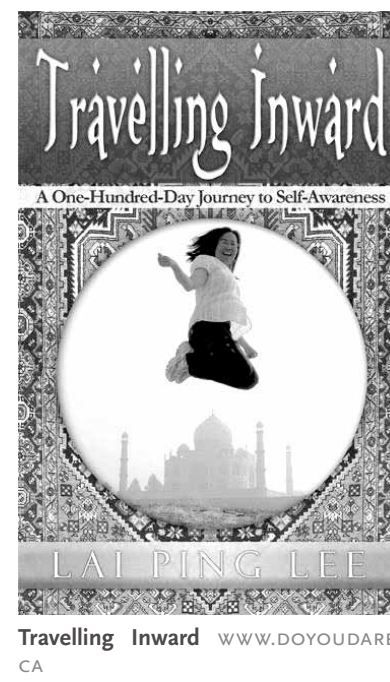
Lai Ping credits the journey with opening her mind and changing the focus of her life.

"All this time, I was conditioned to be a follower, a consumer, and had a notion that focusing on myself was normal and acceptable behaviour," she said. "Looking deeper and finding self-love was made possible by all the wonderful people I met there."

Raised in China's Guangdong province, Lai Ping moved to Toronto when she was 22. As a new immigrant, she worked in Toronto's Chinatown with little resources and later on went on to become an image consultant.

She announced at the launch her goal of donating a portion of the book proceeds to a charity in India.

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# Ottawa Chamberfest refines chamber music's intimate traditions

By RYAN MOFFATT  
Epoch Times Staff

"Four rational people conversing," was how the famous German writer Johann Wolfgang von Goethe described chamber music. The intimate musical conversations that began 200 years ago are still spoken throughout the world, albeit with a varied number of musicians doing the talking and a few more people listening in.

Chamber music still draws crowds and delights music enthusiasts around the world and Canadian devotees are no exception, showing keen appreciation for the genre.

The Ottawa Chamber Music Festival has grown to become the world's largest of its kind and each year draws people from around the world. From its humble inception in 1994 with 22 concerts in two churches, the festival now boasts a schedule of 90 concerts held in diverse indoor and outdoor venues throughout the city.

Of course, one of the key attractions of the festival remains the acoustically perfect heritage churches that have long been among the standout venues.

The grandiose churches add their own magical dimension to



Roman Borys, artistic director of the Ottawa International Chamber Music Festival, speaks at the launch of the 17th annual Chamberfest at the Embassy of Poland in Ottawa on April 27, 2010. THE EPOCH TIMES

the high calibre music and have done their share to cement the reputation of the festival as a cultural destination point for chamber music fans.

Highlights of this year's festival, which runs from July 24

to August 7, include anniversary celebrations of the great composers, hot Canadian talent, and virtuoso musicians from across the globe.

Operatic legend Frederica von Stade, a mezzo-soprano, gets the

opening night honours, performing works that span the diva's three-decade career.

Important anniversaries of past masters will feature prominently in the festival with performances of works by Schumann, Dohnányi, and Chopin, whose 200th birthday was celebrated throughout the classical music community this past year.

Piano virtuoso Alexander Tsylyakov will perform the complete Etudes of Chopin. Described by CBC Canada as "the best kept secret in the piano world," Tsylyakov is a festival favourite.

Canadian music will be in the foreground this year. Penderecki String Quartet will perform new music by Marjan Mozetich and Canadian composer Christos Hatzis will present his multi-media spectacle "Constantinople." This production incorporates a projected visual backdrop that will accompany performances by The Gryphon Trio, Maryem Hassan Tollar, and Patricia O'Callaghan. The stunning production has played to sold-out audiences in Canada, the U.S. and London, U.K., since it premiered at the Banff Summer Arts Festival in 2004.

Canadian pianist Stewart Goodyear will ambitiously take on the mammoth task of play-



Polish Ambassador to Canada, Zenon Kosiniak-Kamysz, hosted the launch of the 2010 Ottawa International Chamber Music Festival at the Embassy of Poland in Ottawa on April 27, 2010. THE EPOCH TIMES

ing all 32 of the Beethoven piano sonatas, considered some of the composer's greatest work. Tokyo String Quartet will close the festival with the works of Schubert, Bartók, and Debussy.

The festival also gives audiences and enthusiasts a chance to meet the performers, maintaining the intimate traditions of chamber music.

Free concerts at Rideau Hall, Canal Music 2010, and the Musical Bicycle Parade ensure that the event remains a family af-

fair, and the Young Peoples Concerts makes certain children of all ages will have their chance to explore what classical music is all about.

Passes and single tickets for the 2010 Ottawa International Chamber Music Festival are on sale now and patrons are reminded that pass and ticket purchases made before April 30 save the HST. For tickets and information please visit [www.chamberfest.com](http://www.chamberfest.com) or call 613 234 6306.

# What's Not On TV

## The trying Dutchman

By ZOE ACKAH  
Epoch Times Staff

I don't watch TV any more. Yeah, really. After spending a year in Ghana, West Africa, I was already severed from the cable umbilical cord. I stayed free. Why should I pay you to talk down to me, pander to my lowest inclinations, and fill my living room with a simulation of life designed to stop me from living my own?

I have now survived three years without television, and some surprising things have happened. I've developed hobbies, interests, and areas of near expertise.

To inaugurate this column, I went big. I went to the opera. I like opera. It is epic in its forces—big orchestra, big voices, big drama, and an overall aura of exclusivity and pomp that makes it giddy fun for an otherwise earthy and sensible individual like me.

To enjoy opera you must study up. Listen to the opera in advance. Go to the library and take out the libretto (the words without the music) and a couple of books about the composer and time period. If you can read music, take out the score and have a look at how the work is put together. At the very least, go to the company's website and read all the online goodies and listen to a few excerpts.

Going to an opera without knowing the music and the plot is a bit like going to a Rolling Stones concert in 2010 without ever having heard Tattoo You or Emotional Rescue—it just won't make sense. Or maybe it would be like going to a Leafs game without knowing the rules of hockey, which brings me to my review.

The Canadian Opera Company's production of Wagner's *The Flying Dutchman* was like going to see a Leafs game and watching them lose—a familiar feeling for Toronto hockey fans.

The Canadian Opera Company's production of Wagner's *The Flying Dutchman* was like going to see a Leafs game and watching them lose—a familiar feeling for Toronto hockey fans. You love the sport, you want to be there and have it all work and it just doesn't. Every scene you hold out hope, you think they might score, but even if they do score once or twice, it's not enough to win the game.



A scene from the Canadian Opera Company's 2010 production of *The Flying Dutchman*. MICHAEL COOPER

The blame rests squarely on the director Christopher Alden's shoulders. Allan Moyer's set was interesting and innovative but few of the possibilities it offered were realized by Alden. The cast hobbled around the slanted stage spending most of their time at the bottom of the angled deck in the corner of the stage that possessed zero energy or possibility.

A physically collapsed Dutchman never moved past the crumpled defeat of the first scene into the "complete calm and dignity" Wagner called for by Act II. I found myself muttering under my breath that if our Dutchman clutched his chest and fell on the floor one more time (or scooped for another note) I would send

him to his maker myself!

Again, I blame the director. When singers are forced to look away from each other in a scene where their mutual gaze is the actual subject, one wonders why no one at COC piped up and said, "Uh, Chris, that's not working." Oh, was the Dutchman actually gazing at the miniature portrait of Senta in his hand? Wow, how clever; she hoists around a ridiculously huge and hideous portrait of him and he stares at a tiny one of her none of us can see. Everyone around me, except the couple audibly snoring behind me, realized something was amiss. There are too many examples.

Thankfully Sandra Horst got her puck in the net. The chorus

stole the show, which is no surprise. The choruses are some of the juiciest parts of *Dutchman*. The men were especially sparkly. They actually woke up the sleeping couple behind me.

Julie Makerov was a fine Senta. She has a powerful voice big enough for the role, and could be heard clearly over the orchestra. Good direction would have helped add that extra ten percent to her performance that was needed. As it was there was no chemistry between her and the Dutchman, making their scenes together nearly unwatchable. Their vocal blend in duet gave evidence to this.

I would like to put in a good word for Canadian tenor Adam Luther who did well as the Steers-

man. He spent a lot of this production glued ridiculously to the walls (I know, a Romantic opera with an Impressionist look) but I'll keep my eye out for him in other productions. I also liked Mats Almgren as Daland. He possessed the most stage presence of all the principals.

However, it was better than television, lumps and all. There are few better experiences than feeling the waft of music coming out of the pit and off the stage. Like a good fan, I complain, but remain loyal to my home team. I'll be there for Maria Stuarda this coming Saturday.

*What's Not On T.V.* is a new weekly column by Zoe Ackah about all things cultural.