

The Final Years of Dinu Lipatti: Live Performance, Recordings, and Personal Struggle (1947–1950)

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Abstract: *This article examines some aspects of the final years of Dinu Lipatti (1947–1950) through the intersection of illness, concert activity, recordings, compositional work, and correspondence, arguing that these years should be understood not as a passive period of decline, but as a phase of artistic compression and intensified self-definition. Drawing on concert programs, recording chronologies, archival documents, letters, and testimonies from collaborators and friends, the study reconstructs the transformation of Dinu Lipatti's public and creative activity in his last years.*

The article also analyses part of Dinu Lipatti's correspondence with musicians, mentors, friends, and family in Romania and Western Europe as a documentary space where artistic discipline, financial pressure, medical uncertainty, and future aspirations converge.

Although important studies have examined Lipatti's recordings and archival documents, these sources have rarely been integrated into a unified historical interpretation of his final years. . Rather than attempting an exhaustive reconstruction of his final years, the article focuses on key events, recordings, performances, and documents most relevant to understanding the relationship between illness, artistic activity, and interpretative concentration in the last phase of his career.

The central argument is that Dinu Lipatti transformed physical limitations into a refined artistic economy, visible in repertoire selection, interpretative concentration, and the documentary traces left by his final years.

Keywords: *Dinu Lipatti; audio recordings archives; Besançon 1950; piano performance; illness; Lipatti's correspondence;*

Introduction

The posthumous image of *the Romanian pianist and composer Dinu Lipatti (1917-1950)* has long been shaped by a powerful, emotionally charged narrative centred on exceptional talent, artistic perfectionism, physical fragility, and premature death. Within twentieth-century pianistic culture, Dinu Lipatti came to embody the ideal artist, whose career seemed suspended between absolute musical control and irreversible bodily decline. This image was reinforced by memorial literature, recordings circulated after his death, and especially by *the mythology surrounding the final recital at Besançon on September 16, 1950*, frequently represented as the symbolic culmination of a life devoted entirely to artistic integrity. As a result, critical discussion has often privileged the emotional aura of the final year over the material realities of Dinu Lipatti's professional activity, creative discipline, and documentary records.

Such representations, although culturally influential, tend to oversimplify the complexity of Dinu Lipatti's final period, reducing it to a tragic biographical epilogue. The emphasis on suffering and transcendence has frequently obscured the extent to which these years remained

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marked by intense artistic planning, continued concert activity, recording projects, repertoire revision, correspondence, pedagogy and some compositional work.

Even as *Hodgkin's disease* progressively limited his physical endurance, Dinu Lipatti continued to negotiate contracts, prepare performances, revise programs, maintain professional networks across Europe, and formulate future artistic projects.

The final years of Dinu Lipatti's life occupy a singular position in twentieth-century music history because they condense, within an exceptionally short period, the interaction between artistic achievement, physical deterioration, and the construction of posthumous cultural memory. Between 1947 and 1950, Dinu Lipatti continued to perform internationally, record extensively, revise repertorial priorities, maintain professional correspondence across Europe, and formulate future artistic plans despite the progressive effects of illness.

These years are therefore significant because they document the transformation of an internationally acclaimed pianist confronting the practical and artistic consequences of terminal illness while attempting to preserve worldwide interpretative authority and professional continuity. The importance of this period lies precisely in its documentary density: concerts, letters, contracts, recordings, unfinished projects, medical interruptions, and testimonies coexist within a compressed historical interval that allows the relationship between artistic production and human limitation to be examined with unusual clarity.

1. Issue & Objectives

The present study, therefore, proposes a shift from commemorative mythology to documentary analysis.

The central methodological problem is how to write about the history of Dinu Lipatti's final years without sentimentalisation or medical reductionism. Such an approach, in my opinion, requires balancing biographical evidence with musical analysis, archival chronology, and performance history *to reconstruct the final stage of Dinu Lipatti's career as a dynamic, self-aware artistic process rather than a passive narrative of disappearance.*

The final phase of Lipatti's career remains insufficiently explored within academic scholarship. Existing literature has largely oscillated between commemorative biography, interpretative admiration, and discographic documentation, often privileging the emotional symbolism of his premature death over a sustained historical analysis. The mythology surrounding the last recital has overshadowed broader questions about repertoire selection, concert planning, recording strategies, compositional activity, and the practical realities of managing illness within an international musical career. Although important contributions have emerged from archival publications, correspondence editions, discographic studies, and recent research on recovered/remastered recordings, these materials have rarely been integrated into a coherent analytical framework capable of reconstructing the final years as a unified artistic and historical process.

This article addresses the scholarly gap by bringing together documentaries, musicals, and archival evidence to examine Lipatti's last years. Its objective is to reconstruct the interaction between physiological decline and artistic decision-making.

The present study does not aim to provide an exhaustive factual reconstruction of every aspect related to Lipatti's life and career during his final years. Rather, it focuses selectively on the most significant events, documents, performances, recordings, and personal circumstances that illuminate the article's central argument.

Recent access to documentary sources makes it possible to reconstruct this final phase in a more historically grounded way. Particularly significant are the two-volume edition of Dinu Lipatti's correspondence, new archival materials related to his unfinished artistic plans, and the increasingly precise chronologies of concerts, broadcasts, and recording sessions established through discographic and archival research.

2. Methodology & Materials

The central body of this article is organised chronologically, following the years 1947, 1948, 1949, and 1950 as distinct yet interconnected stages in the final phase of Dinu Lipatti's life and career. This diachronic structure allows the gradual interaction between illness, artistic activity, professional planning, and public performance to be reconstructed with historical precision.

The first analytical direction, historical-documentary analysis, examines Lipatti's professional activity during these years through concert tours, live appearances, recording sessions, repertoires in preparation, unfinished and completed projects, future artistic plans, and concrete achievements realised despite worsening physical conditions. Particular attention is given to the chronology of performances, recording activity, correspondence networks, repertorial modifications, and the relationship between projected engagements and those ultimately cancelled, postponed, or completed.

The second direction, developed as a *contextual approach*, situates these events within the broader realities of chronic illness, artistic exile, and postwar European musical life. This direction follows the progression of *Hodgkin's disease* and collateral maladies, alongside the social and professional pressures of postwar reconstruction, international travel, financial instability, and geographical displacement. Within this framework, the article explores how physical deterioration progressively influenced artistic expression, interpretative focus, repertory selection, and public perception of Lipatti's final artistic identity.

Each year examined in this study is organised into three chronological sections of approximately four months, allowing the parallel reconstruction of Dinu Lipatti's professional activity and personal circumstances.

2.1 1947: Diagnosis, Artistic Expansion, and Increasing Instability

The year 1947 marked the beginning of the final stage of Dinu Lipatti's career, shaped simultaneously by growing international artistic recognition and the first clear confirmation of a serious illness. Concert tours, recordings, chamber collaborations, and major public successes unfolded alongside increasing medical instability, establishing the fundamental tension that would define the remaining years of his life.

2.1.1 Decisive events prior to 1947

The final phase of Dinu Lipatti's life and career cannot be understood without considering the decisive events that preceded the year 1947.

In the autumn of 1943, Dinu Lipatti left Romania for the last time, initially within the unstable context of wartime Europe. Concert appearances in *Stockholm* and at *Radio Helsinki*, together with performances scheduled in *Switzerland*, marked the continuation of an increasingly

international career² that developed through both solo recitals and collaborative performances with his companion and future wife, pianist *Madeleine Cantacuzino*, as well as with other international artists. At the same time, however, this period also coincided with the first visible manifestations of a serious but still undiagnosed illness that would progressively shape the remaining years of his life.

*As early as the last three months of 1943 (from October 20 1943 to January 30, 1944), the first concert cancellations began to appear, before concerts planned in Zurich, Geneva, and Bern.*³ These interruptions, initially perceived as temporary consequences of fatigue or recurring physical weakness, signalled a pattern that would recur with increasing frequency over the following four years: ambitious concert schedules followed by sudden health crises, alternating periods of recovery and exhaustion, repeated medical consultations, and treatments administered without a precise diagnosis.

The instability between intense professional activity and unpredictable physical decline became one of the defining characteristics of Lipatti's final years.

Despite these difficulties, Dinu Lipatti's artistic career continued to advance internationally. Clearly concerned with finding a stable and steady source of income for his life abroad in Switzerland, Lipatti initially sought a position as a Cultural Attaché at the *International Bureau of Education* in Geneva. To this end, he wrote to his composition teacher in Romania, *Mihail Jora*, requesting his assistance in approaching the relevant ministry to secure this position.⁴

On April 1, 1944, he was appointed an honorary professor at the Geneva Conservatory, where he was entrusted with a piano class of 10 to 12 students. The appointment represented both professional recognition and a form of institutional stability during a period otherwise marked by geographical displacement, financial struggle and medical uncertainty.⁵

Yet the medical explanations offered at the time remained vague and inconclusive, often referring to „a lymph node infection of unknown origin”⁶, or “non-tubercular glandular infections”, which failed to clarify the seriousness of his illness. This prolonged diagnostic uncertainty contributed to the atmosphere of tension surrounding Dinu Lipatti's increasingly fragile health throughout the next three years.

The years immediately following the end of the war continued to alternate between artistic success and uncontrolled physical limitation.

² On 4 September 1943, *Dinu Lipatti* departed Romania together with his life companion, Romanian pianist *Madeleine Cantacuzino*, for what was initially planned as a short concert tour of approximately ten days, a journey that ultimately became a permanent exile. Following an emergency landing in *Hungary* due to a mechanical failure, he continued his itinerary through *Vienna, Stockholm, and Helsinki* before undertaking a concert tour in *Switzerland*. Mark Ainley. 2018, March 20. „Dinu Lipatti: Prince of Pianists”, in *The Piano Files*. Retrieved May 2, 2026, from <https://www.thepianofiles.com/dinu-lipatti-prince-of-pianists/>.

³ „As for my health, I have had no luck at all since my arrival in Switzerland. On October 20, I fell ill in Lucerne, believing myself to be the victim of food poisoning; on November 20, I had another bout of fever, which lasted around twenty days; and immediately after the New Year, a third episode set in and forced me to withdraw to the mountains for a month. On January 12, I left for Montana [...] where I hoped to recover my health. There, after numerous chest radiographs, they finally realised that I had a point of congestion in my right lung. [...] I was allowed to perform on the condition that I would not give more than one concert every three weeks.”

Dinu Lipatti. 2017. „Letter to Florica Musicescu, December 23, 1943” in *Letters [Scrisori]*, vol. I, București: Grafoart, p.218.

⁴ Dinu Lipatti. 2017. „Letter to Mihail Jora, November 4, 1943” in *Letters [Scrisori]*, vol. I, București: Grafoart, pp.120-121.

⁵ „From April 1st, I was appointed professor of the advanced course at the Conservatory of Geneva, where I currently have ten students with whom I work almost daily in preparation for their examinations. This appointment, unfortunately, is quasi-honorary (only 150 Swiss francs per month), but it has given me prestige in Switzerland that I would never have hoped for. Every week, professionals and concert performers come to me to seek pianistic advice.” Dinu Lipatti.2017. „Letter to Mihail Jora, May 25, 1944” in *Letters [Scrisori]*, vol. I, București: Grafoart, p. 123.

⁶ Dinu Lipatti.2017. „Letter to Florica Musicescu, May 12, 1944” in *Letters [Scrisori]*, vol. I, București: Grafoart, p. 244.

Although several reliable biographical sources confirm that Dinu Lipatti was preparing an American concert tour in 1946, no detailed itinerary or confirmed list of cities has yet been identified in publicly accessible sources.⁷

At the same time, however, his growing reputation as a pianist was confirmed⁸ by a recording contract offered by Columbia- EMI, whose financial terms reportedly placed him alongside the leading international performers of the period⁹. This recognition consolidated his position within postwar European musical life and opened the possibility of preserving his artistry through studio recordings at a moment when live performance was becoming increasingly uncertain.

Alongside these recording projects, Dinu Lipatti continued to appear in concerts in Italy (Milano)¹⁰, Belgium, France, especially in Paris, and Switzerland, maintaining an intense artistic presence despite the worsening physical conditions that increasingly threatened the continuity of his career.

2.1.2. January to April, 1947

The opening months of 1947 reveal the increasingly unstable balance between Dinu Lipatti's growing international prestige and the progressive deterioration of his physical condition.

Despite recurring health crises, the period was marked by important artistic achievements, significant recording activity, ambitious professional projects, and the first medical clarification of the illness that had remained uncertain for several years. These months illustrate with clarity the dual reality that would define Dinu Lipatti's final period: exceptional artistic visibility coexisting with mounting physical vulnerability.

One of the most important public successes of the season occurred on 16 February 1947, when Dinu Lipatti performed Edvard Grieg's *Piano Concerto in A minor* in Paris under the auspices of the *Société des Concerts*. The performance was received with considerable acclaim and confirmed his position among the leading pianists active in postwar European musical life. Yet this artistic triumph unfolded against the background of increasingly fragile health. During the same period, Dinu Lipatti was forced to postpone several concerts planned in London and Milano because of a new and severe medical crisis¹¹, continuing the pattern of interruptions and cancellations that had begun during the war years and were now becoming more frequent.

7*** „Biography and Chronology” in *Dinu Lipatti.org*. Retrieved May 6, 2026, from <https://www.dinulipatti.org/biography-chronology?offset=20&utm>

⁸ „Dinu received offers to record for His Master's Voice (Columbia Label), six record sides and an exclusive two-year contract, enjoying the same conditions as Pablo Casals and Alfred Cortot.” Dinu Lipatti.2017. „Madeleine Cantacuzino's letters to Florica Musicescu, February 24, 1946” in *Letters [Scrisori]*, vol. I, București: Grafoart, p.234.

⁹ „Decca hoped to organize a tour for Lipatti, and over a two-month period make a large number of recordings. It [was] proposed to record piano concertos of Chopin and other composers. When EMI learned of this, they quickly intervened (they had not followed through on a previous offer to Lipatti) and won the artist to their Columbia sub-label.” Mark Ainley. 2018, March 20. „Dinu Lipatti: Prince of Pianists”, in *The Piano Files*. Retrieved May 2, 2026, from <https://www.thepianofiles.com/dinu-lipatti-prince-of-pianists/>.

¹⁰ He performed *Piano Concerto No. 1 in E minor* at La Scala, conducted by Antonino Votto, and was heard and congratulated during the rehearsals by the great Italian conductor Arturo Toscanini („At last, here is a Chopin without affectations, with the rubato that I like”), as well as on the evening of the performance. Dinu Lipatti.2017. „Letter to Florica Musicescu, August 9, 1946” in *Letters [Scrisori]*, vol. I, București: Grafoart, pp. 245-246.

¹¹ „Upon my arrival in London, I was bedridden with a fever of 39 degrees for a week, losing a recital and the symphonic concert at Royal Albert Hall (2,600 seats, which apparently was almost full), as well as two other concerts. Toward the end of my stay, I performed Mozart in D minor and was able to make recordings that will be released on the market on May 1st.” Dinu Lipatti.2017. „Letter to Florica Musicescu”, March 30, 1943” in *Letters [Scrisori]*, vol. I, București: Grafoart, p.276.

At the same time, the initial months of 1947 marked an important phase in Lipatti's recording career. He completed several recordings for Columbia, including Chopin's Sonata No. 3 in B minor (on March 1 and 4), the Nocturne No. 8 in D-flat major,¹² Bach's Chorale in G major, and Scarlatti's Sonata Pastorale. The recording of the Chopin Sonata occupied a particularly significant place within this activity. Although Lipatti initially expressed dissatisfaction with aspects of the performance,¹³ the recording was nevertheless awarded the *Prix Charles Cros* by the French Academy, further consolidating his artistic reputation and confirming the exceptional critical reception of his recorded work. The contrast between Lipatti's own perfectionism and the public recognition granted to these recordings would remain characteristic of his relationship with the studio during the final years of his life.

The same months also reveal Dinu Lipatti's continued efforts to project himself into future artistic collaborations¹⁴ despite worsening medical uncertainty.

He planned to form a chamber trio with cellist Antonio Janigro and violinist Arthur Grumiaux, envisioning a series of concerts in Switzerland and Italy.¹⁵ Although the projected tour would only be partially realised, the collaboration would not materialise, as Arthur Grumiaux did not respond to the invitation.¹⁶ The initiative demonstrates that Dinu Lipatti continued to think in terms of long-term artistic development rather than immediate withdrawal from public life.

Behind these professional activities, however, the medical situation was becoming increasingly serious. During this period, physicians Henri Dubois-Ferrière and Edmond Sarasin finally communicated a diagnosis much closer to what historical evidence later identified as Hodgkin's disease, for the 1947 diagnosis described as *malignant lymphogranulomatosis*.¹⁷ Although the terminology and prognosis of the period remained imprecise by modern standards, the diagnosis marked a decisive turning point, providing the first relatively coherent explanation for the recurring crises, exhaustion, and physical decline that had progressively affected Dinu Lipatti since the early 1940s.

At the same time, against the background of the calamity unleashed through the persecution of intellectuals in post-war Romania, with the growing Russian influence and the infiltration of communists into the state structures, Dinu Lipatti attempted, unsuccessfully, to convert the

¹² Warner Classics. Dinu Lipatti-subject. „Nocturne no.8 in D flat major, op.27 no.2 [by Fr. Chopin]”, by Parlophone Records Limited. Retrieved May 5, 2026, from https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xTvEFEav5_s

¹³ “For the Piano Sonata, I played it for three days; recording for discs is terribly difficult, yet beautiful work indeed! The Scherzo had driven me to despair: no matter how softly I played, it still sounded too loud. After we moved on to the Largo and the Finale, I asked, half-jokingly, to repeat the Scherzo just one more time, and it finally came out as it should. Luckily, I caught the right moment. Now I tremble as I wait for the test pressings (I recorded three takes for each section), which will arrive in two days. The director of Columbia wrote to me to say that he had heard them and was absolutely delighted. In May, I shall try to send a copy to our Radio [in Romania] as well.” Dinu Lipatti. 2017. „Letter to Florica Musicescu, March 30, 1947” in *Letters [Scrisori]*, vol. I, București: Grafoart, pp. 276–277.

¹⁴ Important musical projects and collaborations began to emerge for him. First, he was invited by Ernest Ansermet to give the Swiss premiere of Béla Bartók's Piano Concerto No. 3 and subsequently to present it in Paris, Brussels, London, and Rome. Lipatti was more captivated because it was the last work of the Hungarian composer, left almost unfinished (the final seventeen measures were only sketched), and because he identified Romanian melodic inflexions in the composition's sonorities. He then planned to begin studying new recital repertoire, including Piano Sonata op. 31 no 2 by L. van Beethoven, Piano Sonata by Bartok from 1926, new works by Frédéric Chopin, English Suite No. 3 by J. S. Bach, and even Mephisto Waltz No. 1 by F. Liszt. Dinu Lipatti. 2017. „Letter to Florica Musicescu, March 30, 1947” in *Letters [Scrisori]*, vol. I, București: Grafoart, p. 277.

¹⁵ Dinu Lipatti. 2017. „Letter to Florica Musicescu, March 30, 1947” in *Letters [Scrisori]*, vol. I, București: Grafoart, p. 280.

¹⁶ “Since I wrote to Arthur Grumiaux, he has given no sign of life; I shall not be the one to make another attempt in this matter. Tant pis!” Dinu Lipatti. 2017. „Letter to Florica Musicescu, June 23, 1947” in *Letters [Scrisori]*, vol. I, București: Grafoart, p. 282.

¹⁷***, “Biography and Chronology” in *Dinu Lipatti.org*. Retrieved May 6, 2026, from <https://www.dinulipatti.org/biography-chronology?offset=20&utm>.

remaining family lands that had not been expropriated by the first socialist government by accepting their sale to interested buyers.

At the same time, with extraordinary determination and in extremely meticulous detail, he tries to organise the emigration and a permanent settlement in Switzerland of *his former Romanian teacher, Florica Musicescu (1887-1969)*, securing for her in the most concrete manner possible a piano teaching position at *the Conservatory of Lausanne*, together with employment contract, boarding-house rental arrangements, prospective students, residence visa arrangements, financial estimates, and complex travel documents. Unfortunately, *Florica Musicescu* would not be able to leave Romania during the 1946–47 context surrounding this planned final relocation.¹⁸

Nevertheless, even after receiving this diagnosis, Dinu Lipatti maintained an active concert schedule. *April 1947 brought a series of recital appearances in Rome, Milan, and Turin*, confirming both his continued artistic demand and his determination to preserve an international performing career despite the increasing limitations imposed by illness.

2.1.3. May to August, 1947

The months between May and August demonstrate that, despite the progression of illness and recurring exhaustion, Dinu Lipatti continued to sustain an intense artistic rhythm marked by chamber music activity, recording experiments, charity concerts, and the exploration of new repertoires. This period also reveals the increasing coexistence of public artistic achievement and profound personal strain, as professional commitments unfolded alongside physical fragility and family loss.

In May 1947, Lipatti appeared in a series of chamber recitals with the cellist Antonio Janigro, whom he actively introduced to Swiss audiences through performances in *Lausanne, Bern, and Zürich*. These collaborations reflected Lipatti's growing interest in chamber music during the later years of his career, a direction that allowed for greater artistic intimacy while also demanding a different form of physical endurance than that required by large-scale concerto appearances. During the same period, *Lipatti and Janigro participated in a set of experimental recordings for the Jecklin label in Zürich*, focusing on chamber repertory by Bach, Beethoven, Chopin, Rimsky-Korsakov¹⁹, Fauré and Ravel. Among the recorded works was a movement from *Beethoven's Sonata No. 3, Op. 69*, a composition that occupied a central place within the cello-piano repertory of the period.²⁰

At Lipatti's request, the test recordings were later transferred to Columbia. Although long considered lost, five of the six surviving discs were eventually recovered and issued in 1995 by

¹⁸ Several letters exchanged to Florica Musicescu from October 1946 to January 1948. Dinu Lipatti. 2017. „Letter to Florica Musicescu, in *Letters [Scrisori]*, vol. I, București: Grafoart, pp. 253-324.

¹⁹ Naxos USA. Antonio Janigro-subject. 2017, August 8. „*The Tale of Tsar Saltan. Flight of the bumblebee, arr. for cello and piano*”, Antonio Janigro- cello; Dinu Lipatti-piano, provided by NAXOS USA, “Dinu Lipatti 100th Anniversary edition”. Retrieved May 7, 2026 from https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pV6FV3Mi7wQ&list=RDpV6FV3Mi7wQ&start_radio=1.

²⁰ In correspondence received from EMI's London office in 1989, Mark Ainley learned of a group of previously unpublished recordings made by *Dinu Lipatti* together with *cellist Antonio Janigro*. According to the information communicated at the time, the recordings had once belonged to the collection of *Elisabeth Schwarzkopf*, widow of the Columbia producer *Walter Legge*, before subsequently disappearing from the archive without being returned. The existence of these performances had apparently remained unknown even among specialised collectors and researchers of historical piano recordings. Through subsequent archival investigations, five of the six original discs were recovered from *the cellist Ulrich Bracher*, a former student of Janigro, allowing these rare documents to re-enter the historical discography of Lipatti's final years. Mark Ainley. 2020, June 22. „Dinu Lipatti plays Beethoven”, in *The Piano Files*. Retrieved May 4, 2026, from <https://www.thepianofiles.com/dinu-lipatti-plays-beethoven/>.

the German label *Archiphon*²¹ and published in 2011 for the 100th Anniversary celebration, through the efforts of the Canadian researcher and recording specialist *Mark Ainley*. The later rediscovery of these documents significantly enriched the understanding of Lipatti's chamber music activity and expanded the surviving sonic evidence of his final years beyond the better-known commercial recordings.

On 6 June 1947, Dinu Lipatti participated in a major *charity concert* at the *Grand Théâtre de Genève* organised to raise funds for the *Swiss Red Cross* and for Romanian children orphaned by the war. Conducted by *Ernest Ansermet*, the program included *Liszt's Piano Concerto in E-flat major* and *Chopin's Andante spianato et Grande polonaise brillante*. The event reflected not only Lipatti's continuing prominence within Swiss musical life, but also his enduring emotional and cultural connection to Romania during the difficult postwar years.

Only weeks later, however, *Dinu Lipatti suffered a profound personal loss with the death of his father, Theodor Lipatti, in Romania*. Because of political and geographical circumstances, he was unable to return or say farewell in person. The emotional impact of this event coincided with an already fragile physical condition and contributed further to the atmosphere of instability surrounding this period of his life.²²

Despite ongoing illness and incomplete recovery, *Lipatti continued to perform during the summer months*. He appeared at *concerts in Samaden and Silvaplana near St. Moritz*,²³ maintaining a public presence even as his physical resistance was increasingly compromised. He also performed *Mozart's Piano Concerto K. 466* in collaboration with *the composer and conductor Paul Hindemith at the Lucerne Festival*, an event that attracted considerable critical attention because Lipatti chose to perform Beethoven's cadenzas for the concerto. Although the concert was widely regarded as one of the artistic highlights of the festival, part of the press reacted with confusion and controversy, some critics mistakenly believing that the dramatic and stylistically unexpected cadenzas had been written by Dinu Lipatti himself.²⁴ The episode nevertheless illustrates Dinu Lipatti's intellectually sophisticated approach to performance tradition and his willingness to engage with historically grounded yet unconventional interpretative choices. At the same time, Dinu was preparing at home, together with Madeleine, *Sonata for Two Pianos and Percussion* by B. Bartok, for which Columbia Records had made a recording proposal.²⁵

At the same time, *Dinu Lipatti remained deeply involved in charitable and exploratory musical projects*. Another recital devoted to Chopin's music²⁶ was organised to raise funds for Romanian

²¹ Naxos USA. Antonio Janigro-subject.2015, January 30. „*Piece en forme de habanera [M.Ravel]*”. Antonio Janigro- cello; Dinu Lipatti-piano@Archiphon, 2011 „*Les Inédites*”, provided by NAXOS USA. Retrieved May 7, 2026, from https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pjjMTsfJyh8&list=RDpjjMTsfJyh8&start_radio=1.

²² „*His suffering saddens me profoundly. [...] He is also deeply worried and wonders what will become of his mother and what difficulties his brother will have to face. [...] And you can imagine how much he would wish to come to the aid of his family. Fortunately, he has finished with the concerts, forty-six in number this season; there should have been sixty, but the remainder were postponed because of his health, always fragile.*” Dinu Lipatti.2017. „Madeleine Cantacuzino's letters to Florica Musicescu, June 23, 1947” in *Letters [Scrisori]*, vol. I, București: Grafoart, p. 287.

²³ „*At Silvaplana, Dinu performed in a superb Romanesque church [...] and since there were so many people, Artur Schnabel was also there, unable to find a seat and patiently waiting outside the church to enter. [...] I offered him my place, which Schnabel responded What do you expect? The impresario was mistaken, for Lipatti, Saint Peter's Cathedral in Rome should have been reserved, not this little church!*” Dinu Lipatti.2017. „Madeleine Cantacuzino's letter to Florica Musicescu, September 7, 1947” in *Letters [Scrisori]*, vol. I, București: Grafoart, p. 317.

²⁴ Mark Ainley. 2018, March 20. „Dinu Lipatti: Prince of Pianists”, in *The Piano Files*. Retrieved May 2, 2026, from <https://www.thepianofiles.com/dinu-lipatti-prince-of-pianists/>.

²⁵ Dinu Lipatti.2017. „Letter from Madeleine Cantacuzino to Florica Musicescu, June 23, 1947” in *Letters [Scrisori]*, vol. I, București: Grafoart, p. 290.

²⁶ „*1947 Chopin recital was a heroic survey of the composer's works: 6 Preludes, 3 Etudes, Sonata Op.58, Ballade op.52, Mazurka Op.50 No.3, Scherzo Op.20, Nocturne Op.27 No.2, Waltz Op.34 No.1, and Polonaise Op.22.*” Mark Ainley. 2018, March 20.

war victims and children affected by the conflict. *He also made repeated efforts to secure conduct engagements for Constantin Silvestri.*²⁷

During this same period, *Dinu Lipatti and Madeleine Cantacuzino privately tested Béla Bartók's recently composed Piano Concerto No. 3 in a two-piano version performed in their apartment for friends and close acquaintances.* The event demonstrates Lipatti's continuing intellectual curiosity and his desire to engage with contemporary repertory even as his physical decline progressed.

Dinu Lipatti's concert repertoire included twenty-three works for piano and orchestra, from Bach- Busoni (D minor, C major and C minor for 2 pianos and orchestra), Haydn, Mozart (K 271, K467, K466, K365), Chopin (E minor and Andante spianato & Grande polonaise brillante), Schumann, Grieg, Liszt (no.1 and no.2), Beethoven (no.3 and no.5), Bartok (no. 3), to his own Concertino, his Danses Roumaines, Stravinsky's Capriccio, Franck Martin's Ballade and La Danse de la peur for Piano and Orchestra, and Ravel's Left-hand Concerto and G major Concerto.

2.1.4. September to December, 1947

The final months of 1947 continued to alternate among important professional achievements, disastrous political and social news affecting his friends and family in his native country²⁸, Romania, and increasingly severe physical instability, reinforcing the contradictory rhythm that had come to define Dinu Lipatti's life during these years. Even as medical crises became more frequent, Lipatti maintained a demanding artistic schedule that included recording sessions, radio appearances, and international concert engagements, demonstrating both his continuing prestige and his determination to preserve artistic continuity despite worsening health.

In September 1947, *Dinu Lipatti travelled to London for a new series of recordings.* During these sessions, he recorded *Scarlatti's Sonata in E major, L. 23, Bach's Chorale in G major, and Liszt's Sonetto del Petrarca No. 104,*²⁹ a repertoire that reflected the refined stylistic balance

„Dinu Lipatti: Prince of Pianists”, in *The Piano Files*. Retrieved May 2, 2026, from <https://www.thepianofiles.com/dinu-lipatti-prince-of-pianists/>.

²⁷ „We heard in The Hague a Hungarian violinist, a friend of Constantin Silvestri. Dinu, as you know him, will continue trying to obtain an engagement in Paris for Silvestri; in Switzerland, it is impossible, since he is not known there, and here they engage only conductors of international renown.” Dinu Lipatti.2017. „Letter from Madeleine Cantacuzino to Florica Musicescu, October 11, 1947” in *Letters [Scrisori]*, vol. I, București: Grafoart, p. 308.

²⁸ Between the falsified Elections of November 1946 and the forced abdication of King Michael I of Romania on 30 December 1947, Romanian society underwent a rapid and traumatic political transformation under increasing Soviet influence. The communist-controlled government progressively dismantled democratic institutions, marginalised and later dissolved the traditional liberal and democratic parties and initiated systematic persecution against political opponents and intellectual elites. *The proclamation of the Romanian People's Republic* marked the beginning of a new ideological order dominated by the communist bloc, generating fear, censorship, confiscations, arrests, and profound uncertainty among artists, academics, and the educated classes, many of whom attempted to emigrate or found themselves suddenly isolated behind the emerging Iron Curtain.

***„Communist Romania” in *Romanian History in Encyclopedia Britannica*. Retrieved May 10 from <https://www.britannica.com/place/Romania/Communist-Romania>.

²⁹ *Dinu Lipatti* had originally recorded *Chopin's Waltz* and *Liszt's Sonetto del Petrarca* during his first Columbia session in Zürich in July 1946, together with Liszt's *La Leggerezza*. However, the master discs were damaged during transport to London and attempts to transfer them in October 1946 revealed distortions too severe for commercial release. The Chopin and Liszt works were therefore re-recorded successfully at Abbey Road Studios on 24 September 1947. *La Leggerezza*, although never remade in the studio, survived a BBC broadcast the following day; a privately preserved off-air recording, later located by Mark Ainley, was eventually issued in 1995. The same broadcast also included Lipatti's performance of the *Chopin Waltz* and a *Chopin Étude*, probably Op. 10 No. 2.

Mark Ainley.2022. September 24. „Dinu Lipatti at Abbey Road, September 24, 1947” in *The Piano Files*. Retrieved May 4 from <https://www.thepianofiles.com/dinu-lipatti-at-abbey-road-september-24-1947/>.

characteristic of his late recording activity, moving between Baroque clarity, Romantic lyricism, and controlled expressive intensity. Alongside these solo works, *Dinu Lipatti also recorded Grieg's Piano Concerto with orchestra under the direction of Alceo Galliera*,³⁰ one of the major orchestral collaborations of his final years. These recordings further strengthened his relationship with Columbia and contributed decisively to the posthumous image of Lipatti as one of the most refined pianists preserved by the recording medium.

While in England, Lipatti also gave two BBC Radio performances, confirming the growing importance of radio culture in sustaining the visibility of European musicians during the postwar years. Delighted by *his own recitals at Engadine*, Dinu Lipatti consulted Miss Florica Musicescu as to whether it might be appropriate to invite *George Enescu*, then outside Romania, to appear in a concert during the second half of the year, as conductor alongside him at the piano.³¹

Following the London engagements, *Dinu Lipatti continued with a short concert tour in the Netherlands*, appearing in Hilversum and The Hague to perform Bach's Piano Concertos in D minor and G major. A recording documenting *Dinu Lipatti's performance of Bach-Busoni's arrangement of Bach's Concerto, given in Amsterdam on 2 October 1947 with the Concertgebouw Orchestra under Eduard van Beinum*, has more recently become publicly accessible. The interpretation attracted particular interest for its comparatively unconventional and strongly Busoni-oriented approach to the score, revealing a broader interpretative flexibility than is often associated with Lipatti's posthumous image.³²

Yet the year's conclusion once again exposed the increasingly precarious reality behind these artistic successes. *Shortly after returning to his residence in Switzerland, Dinu Lipatti suffered another serious health crisis*. The episode marked a further deterioration in his already unstable condition and foreshadowed the intensification of medical struggles that would dominate the years to come.

Meanwhile, the fall of the democratic regime and, implicitly, of the Monarchy in Romania, together with the establishment of the Socialist People's Republic, brought new hardships for those back home, while Dinu Lipatti sought by every possible means to help his loved ones who remained behind the Iron Curtain.³³

By the end of 1947, the contrast between public artistic triumph and private physical decline had become inseparable, establishing the fundamental tension that would shape the remainder of his final artistic journey.

2.2. 1948: Between International Recognition and Physical Decline

The year 1948 represents a decisive moment of tension between expansion and limitation in Dinu Lipatti's final artistic period.

³⁰ Private Reserve.2022, October 7. „*Grieg: Piano Concerto in A 1947 Lipatti/ Galliera*”. Retrieved May 5 from https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wKUSQn8zzdo&list=RDwKUSQn8zzdo&start_radio=1.

³¹ Dinu Lipatti.2017. „Letter to Florica Musicescu, September 5, 1947” in *Letters [Scrisori]*, vol. I, București: Grafoart, p. 299.

³² The Piano Files. 2023, October 2. „*Dinu Lipatti plays Bach-Busoni Concerto in D minor BWV 1052 live in Amsterdam*”. Retrieved May 5, 2026, from <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mzQ55kY4usE&t=1s>.

³³ „*I sent the music manuscript paper to Mihail Jora. Constantin Silvestri has been engaged to perform with me on 27 April 1948 at the Concert Society of the Conservatory in Paris. I am to play Piano Concerto No. 21 in C major and Schumann Piano Concerto in A minor, since by then I shall have the latter in my fingers. Silvestri still must confirm his arrival in Paris. Miss Florica, have you received from us, from Switzerland, the parcel with the sugar cubes?*” Dinu Lipatti.2017. „Letter to Florica Musicescu, January 1, 1948” in *Letters [Scrisori]*, vol. I, București: Grafoart, p. 325.

On the one hand, his international reputation reached one of its highest points through successful recordings, major concert tours, collaborations with prominent conductors and musicians, and ambitious plans for future performances across Europe and beyond.

On the other hand, the progression of illness increasingly disrupted the practical continuity of his career, imposing cycles of treatment, exhaustion, and uncertainty that affected both his physical endurance and professional stability. The year thus reveals the coexistence of two parallel trajectories: the consolidation of Dinu Lipatti's artistic authority within postwar European musical life and the accelerating deterioration of the bodily condition that made such activity progressively more difficult to sustain.

2.2.1. January to April 1948

The opening months of 1948 began under the sign of growing artistic recognition, even as Dinu Lipatti's physical condition remained increasingly unstable. Early in the year, *recordings were made in London during the autumn of 1947³⁴ were officially released, and their commercial success exceeded the producers' expectations.*³⁵ The enthusiastic reception of these discs further consolidated Lipatti's international reputation and confirmed the exceptional impact of his recorded artistry at a moment when the recording industry was becoming central to postwar musical culture. Critical appreciation emphasised clarity, refinement, and expressive control of his interpretations, qualities that increasingly defined the public perception of his pianism during the final years of his life.

At the same time, the recordings' success coincided with a renewed period of intense concert activity. *The months of February and March 1948 were dominated by an extensive series of performances throughout Switzerland*, where Dinu Lipatti continued to appear in recitals and orchestral concerts despite recurring health difficulties. These tours reveal both the continuing demand for his performances and his determination to sustain a visible artistic presence within European musical life. Switzerland, which had gradually become the centre of his professional and personal existence during the war and postwar years, also offered a relatively stable environment from which he could continue performing while undergoing medical supervision and treatment.

Dinu Lipatti recorded *Robert Schumann's Piano Concerto in A minor, Op. 54 with Herbert von Karajan and the Philharmonia Orchestra in London*, at Abbey Road Studios, on 9–10 April 1948 for *Columbia Records*.³⁶

Dinu Lipatti resumed contact with his friend, the composer *Igor Markevitch*, who, after the war, began a successful conducting career, and they started planning several projects together.

The Canadian researcher *Mark Ainley* presented, in an article, a recently recorded schedule sample dated 15 April 1948 that indicates Dinu Lipatti had planned a series of studio sessions devoted to works by *Scarlatti, Chopin, Ravel, Debussy, and de Falla*, including *two additional Scarlatti sonatas* following those already recorded the previous year. The document also confirms

³⁴ Naxos USA. Dinu Lipatti-subject. 2020, May 14. „*Années de pèlerinage, 2e année Italie, S161: V. Petrarch, Sonnet 104*”, Dinu Lipatti, Columbia recordings 1947-1948, provided by NAXOS, USA. Retrieved May 6, 2026, from https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9C8z04B3K2k&list=RD9C8z04B3K2k&start_radio=1.

³⁵ „*The London reviews of my recording of Grieg's Piano Concerto in A minor were extraordinary. Now Columbia Records is insisting most strongly that I record Schumann Piano Concerto in A minor in April (I worked on this piece during the summer of 1945), with Herbert von Karajan on the podium.*” Dinu Lipatti. 2017. „Letter to Florica Musicescu, January 1, 1948” in *Letters [Scrisori]*, vol. I, București: Grafoart, p. 324.

³⁶ „*The Schumann Concerto was particularly well-received (even if Lipatti wasn't too happy with the super-classical Karajan's tempi)*” Mark Ainley. 2018, March 20. „*Dinu Lipatti: Prince of Pianists*”, in *The Piano Files*. Retrieved May 2, 2026, from <https://www.thepianofiles.com/dinu-lipatti-prince-of-pianists/>.

that Ravel's *Alborada del Gracioso* formed part of a deliberate recording project rather than a spontaneous studio decision. Some of the planned recording dates were later cancelled, and surviving evidence suggests that only the Chopin *Barcarolle* and the Ravel work were ultimately recorded, the *Barcarolle* itself remaining unpublished until after Lipatti's death.³⁷

Although the surviving documentation from *this period frequently emphasises artistic success, the rhythm of travel and concert appearances increasingly unfolded amid physical exhaustion*. The contrast between the growing prestige of Dinu Lipatti's public image and the fragility of his health became more pronounced as the year progressed, reinforcing the sense that artistic productivity and physical limitation were evolving simultaneously rather than separately during this stage of his career.

2.2.2. May to August 1948

The months between May and August 1948 were marked by a combination of concert activity, recording projects, pedagogical obligations, and increasingly demanding medical treatments. Despite the progressive effects of illness³⁸, Dinu Lipatti continued to maintain an international artistic presence, balancing touring schedules and studio work with the growing physical limitations that increasingly shaped the organisation of his daily life.

In May 1948, Lipatti undertook a concert tour that included performances in Great Britain, Scotland and England (recitals at Wigmore Hall and the Albert Hall)³⁹ and at BBC London and BBC Glasgow⁴⁰, the Netherlands, and France⁴¹. These appearances confirmed that he remained highly sought after within European musical circles, even as the practical difficulties of travel and performance grew more severe. During the same period, he returned to London to record Robert Schumann's Piano Concerto in A minor together with Herbert von Karajan. The collaboration

³⁷ Mark Ainley. 2018, March 20. „Dinu Lipatti: Prince of Pianists”, in *The Piano Files*. Retrieved May 2, 2026, from <https://www.thepianofiles.com/dinu-lipatti-prince-of-pianists/>.

³⁸ „I think with concern about all these concerts and journeys to distant countries, but above all about the effect they may have on Dinu's health. The last treatment has left its marks. His left arm is very swollen. [...] He ought to rest, but it is not possible.” Dinu Lipatti. 2017. „Madeleine Cantacuzino letter to Florica Musicescu, May 3, 1948” in *Letters [Scrisori]*, vol. I, București: Grafoart, p. 335.

³⁹ „The recital in London was a great success; the hall was full (nb. Wigmore Hall) [...] The recitals at Royal Albert Hall always disappoint me; it is not a concert hall, but an aircraft hangar. The acoustics are poor and, moreover, one hears too little; the sound comes from too far away; even the tutti forte passages sound merely like a mezzo forte. On the other hand, the pianissimo nuances are heard perfectly, and it must be said that Dinu's pure tone is carried admirably, especially in Mozart. At the BBC he performed the Waldstein Sonata, and for the BBC, but in Glasgow, Scotland (ten hours by train!), he performed Piano Concerto No. 1 in E minor.”

Dinu Lipatti. 2017. „Madeleine Cantacuzino letter to Florica Musicescu, May 3, 1948” in *Letters [Scrisori]*, vol. I, București: Grafoart, pp. 334-335.

⁴⁰ „Their national radio [i.e. the BBC] is a marvel of precision, seriousness, and ingenuity. They have magnificent Steinway & Sons pianos everywhere, and the care they devote to them on broadcasting a recital or symphonic concert in the studio rewards the artist for all his efforts. I perform there often whenever I go to London. Not to mention that I am well paid there: one broadcast amounts to around 1,000 Swiss francs. Unfortunately, fiscal taxes are very high (40%).” Dinu Lipatti. 2017. „Letter to Florica Musicescu, May 16, 1948” in *Letters [Scrisori]*, vol. I, București: Grafoart, p. 340.

⁴¹ „Dinu gave a recital at Salle Pleyel on April 27 [...] it was a magnificent evening. He began with Bach's Toccata in D major, then four Preludes and Fugues from The Well-Tempered Clavier and two chorales (as an encore, the one in G major). I cannot describe to you how he played; the hall was overwhelmed. [...] He then played two Études and the Barcarolle in F-sharp major, Op. 60, followed by Symphonic Etudes, and finally, I do not know how many encores. People simply did not want to leave! Nadia Boulanger, like all the musicians for that matter, declared that he alone brings this message of beauty and greatness [...] he is so different from what we are accustomed to hearing from the virtuosi from America. There, nothing exists beyond technique and outward appearance. It is true that he has made immense progress, that he knows his instrument better than ever before, and that his assurance is convincing; he no longer doubts himself, no longer hesitates, but gives himself wholeheartedly as a perfect servant of Music.” Dinu Lipatti. 2017. „Madeleine Cantacuzino letter to Florica Musicescu, May 3, 1948” in *Letters [Scrisori]*, vol. I, București: Grafoart, p. 334.

united two major musical figures of postwar Europe. The *new recordings made for Columbia this year* also illustrate the increasing importance of the studio in his artistic practice, providing a controlled environment that contrasts with the physical unpredictability of live touring.⁴²

On 30 May 1948, Dinu Lipatti performed *Béla Bartók's Piano Concerto No. 3 with the SWF Symphony Orchestra under the direction of Paul Sacher*, in what remains one of the most significant examples of Lipatti's engagement with contemporary twentieth-century repertoire during his final years. The concerto, completed shortly before Bartók's death and characterised by a more transparent and lyrical musical language, appears to have held particular artistic importance for Lipatti; the collaboration with Paul Sacher, a close associate of Bartók, further situates the performance within an important network of contemporary musical culture.⁴³

Alongside his concert and recording commitments, *Dinu Lipatti continued to teach at the Geneva Conservatory*. Yet by this stage, maintaining his pedagogical schedule had become considerably more difficult. The obligation of dedicating three mornings each week to his piano class increasingly conflicted with the careful management of his limited physical energy. This tension between artistic ambition and physical capacity became one of the defining realities of his daily existence during 1948.

Throughout this entire period, he tried to remain as closely connected as possible to his loved ones back in Romania, especially to his mentors. Dinu Lipatti was fully aware of the difficult situation faced by *George Enescu* and his wife, who had been living poorly in exile since 1946. *He did not cease trying to secure a good position for the Maestro within the teaching staff of the Geneva Conservatory*.⁴⁴

Throughout this entire period, he tried to remain as closely connected as possible to his loved ones back in Romania, who were themselves going through a period of professional decline brought about by the injustices and the overturning of meritocratic values in a Romania under full Soviet occupation, a process that would lead to the establishment of the communist totalitarian regime by 1949. *For Dinu Lipatti, Mihail Jora remained one of the essential figures of his artistic formation, deeply influencing his musical thinking and compositional discipline*. Even after settling abroad, Lipatti maintained an active correspondence with his former mentor, sharing

⁴² „There has been a recurrence of the illness; I can say that it was a severe blow. He continues to take care of himself, but takes advantage of the time to work, and if all goes well we may hope to leave again for London, where he has very important concerts (at Royal Opera House, with an all-Frédéric Chopin programme, another concert at Royal Albert Hall, and several broadcasts for the BBC, with and without orchestra). From there, we are supposed to go to Portugal and the surrounding region, but everything depends on his health. This illness has greatly matured him; his interpretations have gained even more depth. [...] The great success is *Alborada del gracioso*, I believe his finest recording up to now. If he has time, he will go and put a little more music into cans. It is very interesting for the future and greatly helps in building a reputation overseas, and since we are supposed to go there next season, it could prove useful.” Dinu Lipatti. 2017. „Letter from Madeleine Cantacuzino to Florica Musicescu, October 28, 1948” in *Letters [Scrisori]*, vol. I, București: Grafoart, p. 346.

⁴³For decades, the performance was believed either lost or unavailable to the public, surviving only through fragmentary archival references. More recently, however, the Canadian researcher and recording specialist *Mark Ainley* undertook significant efforts to recover, restore, and contextualise the surviving source materials, thereby transforming a largely inaccessible document into a peculiar historical recording available to the public.

Mark Ainley. 2018, May 31. „Dinu Lipatti plays Bartok Third Piano Concerto” in *The Piano Files*. Retrieved May 3, 2026, from <https://www.thepianofiles.com/dinu-lipatti-plays-bartoks-third-piano-concerto/>.

⁴⁴ „Maestro George [Enescu] is playing the Sphinx; I wrote him several letters in order to convey to him an official proposal from the Geneva Conservatory to settle there, with exceptional material conditions, yet he never replied to me. My recital in Paris was on April 27, while his return to the United States was on the 29th, so unfortunately, we missed even the chance to meet in person...It had also been planned for us to give two concerts in Geneva, one with orchestra and one of sonatas with me. Despite a definitive agreement, his impresario informed me that he would be in England at that time and that, therefore, everything was cancelled. A strange attitude indeed!”

Dinu Lipatti. 2017. „Letter to Florica Musicescu, May 16, 1948” in *Letters [Scrisori]*, vol. I, București: Grafoart, p. 342.

artistic projects, personal concerns, and professional reflections, with their letters preserving a strong intellectual and emotional connection despite Romania's growing political isolation.⁴⁵

The summer concluded with a piano recital in Engadin, one final appearance before another serious phase of medical intervention. Shortly afterwards, Dinu Lipatti entered a clinic in Geneva to undergo a series of X-ray treatments. The hospitalisation marked a visible intensification of medical procedures and confirmed that the illness had entered a more critical stage. Even so, the continuity between concert activity and treatment remained characteristic of Dinu Lipatti's final years, as periods of public artistic success were increasingly interrupted, but not entirely halted, by cycles of physical collapse and medical care.

2.2.3 September to December 1948

The final months of 1948 unfolded amid mounting medical uncertainty and increasingly aggressive treatments, yet they also revealed the remarkable persistence of Dinu Lipatti's artistic optimism and his refusal to imagine his career nearing its end.

Following his hospitalisation in Geneva and the series of X-ray treatments undergone during the summer, it became evident that the medical interventions were failing to produce the hoped-for improvement. In response, *Lipatti attempted another experimental treatment involving an H-anatoxin vaccine*, which similarly proved incapable of producing significant or lasting results. The succession of unsuccessful treatments intensified the atmosphere of instability surrounding his condition, while the fluctuations between temporary recovery and severe exhaustion became progressively more difficult to predict.

Despite this worsening medical reality, Dinu Lipatti continued to think in terms of large-scale artistic projects and future international activity. Far from retreating from professional life, he began planning an ambitious concert tour that would have included approximately sixty performances across multiple countries and continents. *The projected itinerary* was intended to begin in *England*, continue through *Portugal and Spain*, then *Australia and the United States*.⁴⁶ The scale of the proposed tour demonstrates not only the continuing international demand for Dinu Lipatti's artistry but also the extraordinary extent to which he maintained a forward-looking artistic mentality even as his physical condition became increasingly fragile.

Although many of these projects would ultimately remain unrealised, their very existence reveals the extent to which Dinu Lipatti continued to envision himself as an active international concert artist rather than as a musician withdrawing from public life because of illness.

⁴⁵ Beginning in the late 1940s, shortly after the establishment of the communist regime in Romania, *the Romanian composer and professor Mihail Jora (1891-1971)*, at the time one of the most respected Romanian composers, *rector of the Royal Academy of Music*, and an influential member of the country's musical institutions, became progressively marginalised for ideological and political reasons. Associated with the former royal and interwar cultural establishment, Jora was removed from leading positions. Very concrete political pressures aimed at the ideological conversion of Mihail Jora began in 1952, when, in the middle of the night, *the Securitate* arrested his wife, sentencing her to four years in prison. During the harsh Stalinist years, particularly between 1948 and 1953, his music was deemed incompatible with the regime's aesthetic and political demands, contributing to a period of isolation and artistic suppression. Like many important composers considered hostile to the regime, he was placed under *the Securitate* [secret political police] surveillance, with informers assigned to him and a file opened in his name. Raluca Voicu-Arnăuțoiu. „Mihail Jora- subject”. In *Muzicieni in Arhivele Securității*. Retrieved May 10, 2026 from <https://www.muzicieni-in-arhive.ro/mihail-jora-ro.php>.

⁴⁶ „*I am working on all the Waltzes of Frédéric Chopin for recordings in June, and I am resuming my old programme for a series of approximately sixty concerts, God willing! [...] I am on the point of signing for five months in Australia and three years in the United States, and I am struggling greatly to avoid the human cunning of impresarios. [...] If all goes well, we shall leave on November 11 for England, Portugal, and Spain, altogether another seventeen concerts. It is sheer madness, but I cannot give up. Primum vivere!*” Dinu Lipatti. 2017. „Letter to Florica Musicescu, October 31, 1948” in *Letters [Scrisori]*, vol. I, București: Grafoart, p. 348.

Amid this unstable balance between hope and physical decline, *the year concluded with an important personal event*. In December 1948, against the background of worsening health and the resolution of complex legal matters related to *Madeleine Cantacuzino's divorce proceedings* in Romania, *Dinu married Madeleine, his long-time companion and closest emotional support* during the final years of his life. The marriage represented both a personal consolidation and a moment of emotional stability within an otherwise increasingly uncertain existence shaped by illness, interrupted projects, and the growing fragility of the future.

2.3. 1949: Withdrawal from Public Life and the Intensification of Illness

The year 1949 marked one of the most difficult and decisive stages in Dinu Lipatti's final years, as the progression of illness increasingly forced him to withdraw from aspects of professional life that had previously remained central to his artistic identity.

2.3.1 January to April 1949

During the first months of the year, he received from *the Institut Curie* in Paris a mustard gas derivative, which, until then, when injected, had caused inflammation of his arm, now administered in an oral form that produced in him a sense of recovery and led him to believe in the possibility of a complete cure. He also began seriously considering, at the insistence of *Nadia Boulanger*, taking *periods of rest and protecting his health through restorative holidays and treatments in the clean alpine air of Swiss boarding houses and clinics* (at Montana-sur-Sierre, at an altitude of 1,500 meters). By this time, she had evolved from being merely his composition teacher into a very close family friend.

On 4 April 1949, Dinu Lipatti made *the painful decision to resign from his teaching position at the Geneva Conservatory*,⁴⁷ entrusting his students to *the younger pianist Nikita Magaloff*. The decision reflected not only the growing physical impossibility of maintaining a regular pedagogical schedule, but also the gradual contraction of his public and institutional activity under the pressure of chronic exhaustion and medical decline. Aware of Dinu Lipatti's worsening condition and reduced professional income, *the director of the Geneva Conservatory intervened to provide financial assistance in the form of a subsidy amounting to 2,800 Swiss francs*. The gesture reflected both institutional solidarity and the recognition that one of Europe's most admired pianists had entered a stage of profound personal and professional vulnerability.

Yet even within this atmosphere of physical deterioration, moments of creative continuity persisted. During the same month, *Dinu Lipatti took satisfaction in returning to composition, completing his "Aubade for wind quartet"*.⁴⁸ The work stands as one of the final concrete expressions of his compositional activity and demonstrates that, despite severe physical limitations, his creative imagination remained active. The completion of the piece and of *some*

⁴⁷ „It is now almost a year since I began struggling with this illness. The latest relapse has been worse than the previous one, and I cannot manage to overcome it. Since February 1st, I have not touched the piano; all concerts until October have been postponed, yet I continue composing from my bed, it is the only thing left to me. [...] I have left the Conservatory, keeping only a four-week interpretation course each year. Engagement offers are pouring in from everywhere, concert dates are being requested of me, yet I can no longer make plans before having the certainty of recovery.” Dinu Lipatti.2017. „Letter to Florica Musicescu, April 10, 1949” in *Letters [Scrisori]*, vol. I, București: Grafoart, p. 354.

⁴⁸ „My very dear Nadia, my farce for wind quartet [i.e. *Aubade for Wind Quartet*] has been finished since April 21, yet the copying of this *Aubade* is taking longer than its actual composition. [...] Then, with God's help, I shall set to work on a series of vocal songs and on a surprise for you.” Dinu Lipatti.2017. „Letter to Nadia Boulanger, May 11, 1949” in *Letters [Scrisori]*, vol. I, București: Grafoart, p. 448.

vocal works (melodies for voice and piano) takes on particular significance in a year otherwise dominated by withdrawal, medical treatment, and interrupted projects.

At the same time, *Dinu Lipatti's health reached a new level of exhaustion that forced him, for the second time, to abandon plans for a concert tour in Australia⁴⁹ and the United States.* The cancellation represented another major professional disappointment, especially given the importance of the American musical market in the postwar international career of European performers.

2.3.2 May to August 1949

By this stage, chronic fatigue, lack of physical energy, and *the cumulative effects of illness had developed into increasingly serious medical complications.* His medical condition further deteriorated with the onset of vertebral decalcification. Blood transfusions and repeated X-ray treatments continued throughout the year, managing only to stabilise his condition temporarily⁵⁰ rather than offering any realistic possibility of recovery.

From June until the end of August, he enjoyed a period of peace, rest, and recovery in Montana, even *working moderately at the piano for a few hours each day on repertoire.*⁵¹

2.3.3 September to December 1949

While these personal struggles intensified, *Dinu Lipatti also experienced a growing symbolic separation from the musical institutions of his native Romania.* In the context of the political and cultural restructuring imposed by the new communist regime, the former *Romanian Composers' Society* was dissolved and replaced by the *Union of Romanian Composers*, on October 21-22, 1949, with elected obscure pro-regime musicians as new president, *Matei Socor* and *Hilda Jerea*, secretary, instead of the former *George Enescu's* presidency and *Mihail Jora's*.

Alongside *George Enescu* and other major musicians living inside the country⁵² or abroad, *the Romanian concert pianist and composer Dinu Lipatti* found himself effectively excluded from

⁴⁹ Although illness increasingly limited Dinu Lipatti's ability to undertake long-distance international tours, including the cancellation of a planned three-month tour of Australia in 1949, for which *concert pianist Witold Malcużyński* was engaged as a replacement, he nevertheless maintained an active concert presence across Europe.

Mark Ainley. 2018, March 20. „Dinu Lipatti: Prince of Pianists”, in *The Piano Files*. Retrieved May 2, 2026, from <https://www.thepianofiles.com/dinu-lipatti-prince-of-pianists/>.

⁵⁰ „My health is improving, and I have begun once again to play and to take short walks here [nb.in Montana]. Of course, several more months of patience will be necessary, but the treatment seems effective, and hope is returning. [...] You speak to me about the *B moll Concerto of Brahms*; unfortunately, for the moment, I am not allowed to study anything physically demanding, so as not to trigger the pleurisy again. Thus, I am confining myself to *The Well-Tempered Clavier, Mozart, and some Chopin.*” Dinu Lipatti. 2017. „Letter to Florica Musicescu, June 16, 1949” in *Letters [Scrisori]*, vol. I, București: Grafoart, p. 358.

⁵¹ „I work three to four hours at the piano; every morning I go over two of the sixteen concertos that I keep most firmly in my repertoire, so as not to let them grow rusty. In this way, I keep my repertoire in a state of readiness. We shall not return to Geneva before the end of September. I have permission to give one concert per month. It is better than nothing, especially since I shall also make recordings. [...] For the moment, I need a new recital programme. I am being invited everywhere, and I hope to have concerts with substantial fees.” Dinu Lipatti. 2017. „Letter to Florica Musicescu, August 20, 1949” in *Letters [Scrisori]*, vol. I, București: Grafoart, p. 360.

⁵² The Stalinist transformation of Romanian cultural life after 1948 also led to severe repression against composers and intellectuals who were considered ideologically unreliable. One of the most striking cases was that of *Dimitrie Cuclin (1885-1978)*, who was arrested and sentenced to forced labour at the Danube-Black Sea Canal after having attended an audition of *Mass in B minor* in the *Library of the British Legation in Bucharest*, an episode illustrative of the absurd suspicion with which any contact with Western culture was treated by the communist authorities. Other important Romanian musicians and composers, including *Mihail Andricu (1894-1974)*, were subjected to harassment, public denunciation, censorship, or continuous surveillance by the *Securitate* during the harsh years of ideological control and socialist realism imposed on Romanian artistic life. Cristian Vasile. 2013. „Literature

the newly established Union, a situation that deepened the sense of geographical and cultural displacement already characteristic of his years in exile.⁵³

Subsequent archival records document the arrest of *Ana Lipatti* at the Romanian border on charges of transporting family jewellery intended to finance her stay abroad, followed by an investigation, trial proceedings, confiscation measures, and continued surveillance by the Securitate authorities well into 1950.⁵⁴ During this period, Dinu Lipatti sought, through numerous personal and professional connections, including *Nadia Boulanger* in France⁵⁵, to obtain information and secure legal intervention to secure his mother's release and acquittal from what he perceived as an unjust political process. The documents illustrate the broader political and human pressures surrounding Lipatti's final years, particularly the difficulties imposed by the communist regime on family reunification and transnational mobility

2.4. 1950: Final Recordings, Last Performances, and the Construction of a Musical Legacy

The year 1950 represents the final and most intensely documented stage of Dinu Lipatti's life, marked simultaneously by temporary artistic revival, severe physical fragility, renewed recording activity, and the symbolic consolidation of the artistic legacy that would define his posthumous reputation.

2.4.1. January to April 1950

After nearly ten months away from active musical life, Dinu Lipatti returned to Geneva at the beginning of the year, attempting once again to reestablish a degree of artistic continuity despite the advanced stage of his illness.

*Toward the end of January 1950, Dinu Lipatti learned that his mother had been held in detention for six weeks following her attempted departure from Romania and that, although she had eventually been released, numerous legal and administrative obstacles continued to prevent her from travelling to Switzerland to care for her seriously ill son. The expiration of previously obtained travel documents, combined with the political suspicions and accusations surrounding the case, left the situation unresolved and deeply uncertain.*⁵⁶ For Lipatti, already weakened by

and the Arts in Communist Romania [Literatura și Artele în România comunistă]", in Chapter "Romanian Music from diversity to the imposition of Communist Party spirit, 1948-1953", Bucharest: Ed. Humanitas digital, pp. 261-285.

⁵³ „After his passing, a true cult of Lipatti's memory began to develop. While abroad, this manifested itself spontaneously and powerfully immediately after his death, in Romania, complete silence was imposed by the political regime. [...] In 1949, Dinu Lipatti was excluded from the Union of Romanian Composers, and it was forbidden to mention him publicly or to publish his name in the press. At the first public conference dedicated to Lipatti's personality, subsequently, beginning in 1956, the taboo was gradually lifted, and extensive research efforts were undertaken, resulting in books, studies, and scholarly conferences.” Lavinia Coman.2017. „Dinu Lipatti, a Romanian Musician in the Context of Universal Culture” [Dinu Lipatti, un muzician român în contextul culturii universale], in *Muzica*, 5/2017, București: Ed. Muzicală, p.85.

⁵⁴ Ana Lipatti, mother of Dinu Lipatti on 25 July 1949 was intercepted by the Romanian communist security authorities, initiating a period of surveillance and legal obstruction directed against her attempts to leave Romania and join her seriously ill son in Switzerland. Written in cautious and partially coded language, likely out of fear of censorship, the letter sent in the name of Madaleine Cantacuzino Lipatti to her mother-in-law reflects Lipatti's worsening health and his request for emotional and practical support during treatment in Switzerland.

Vlad Alexandrescu. 2017. „Dinu Lipatti in the Securitate Archives [Dinu Lipatti în Arhivele Securității]” in *Dinu Lipatti org*. Retrieved May 10.2026 from <https://www.dinulipatti.org/dinu-lipatti-in-arhivele-securitatii-ro-a294>

⁵⁵ „My dear Nadia, I have no news other than the fact that a trial took place on 10 December [1949], upon which depends either her release, and therefore her journey to join us, or her condemnation to prison and all the suffering that would follow from it.” Dinu Lipatti.2017. „Letter to Nadia Boulanger, December 22, 1949” in *Letters [Scrisori]*, vol. I, București: Grafoart, p. 466.

⁵⁶ „The news concerning my mother is somewhat better. After six weeks in prison for having carried with her some personal jewellery of little value in her luggage, she was finally released. In the meantime, however, all the visas obtained have expired.

illness and increasingly dependent on emotional support, the prolonged separation from his mother became an additional source of profound anxiety and emotional distress during the final year of his life.

On 7 February 1950, he appeared in Zürich performing Chopin's Piano Concerto in E minor under the direction of Otto Ackermann⁵⁷, followed on 22 February by Schumann's Piano Concerto in A minor in Geneva with Ernest Ansermet.⁵⁸ These performances demonstrated that, despite his deteriorating physical condition, Dinu Lipatti still sought to maintain a public presence by performing a repertory deeply associated with his interpretative identity.

2.4.2. May to August 1950

In June 1950, Lipatti moved to Chêne-Bourg, near Geneva, into a house offered by friends and equipped with a Steinway piano. The residence became the setting for some of the final important moments of his life. There, the daughter of composer and conductor Igor Markevitch was baptised, with Dinu Lipatti and Nadia Boulanger serving as godparents, an event reflecting the strong network of artistic and personal relationships that continued to surround him despite his declining health.

During the same period, efforts by several major musical figures of the era, including Igor Stravinsky, Charles Munch, Yehudi Menuhin, and Paul Sacher, helped secure access in the United States to a new experimental cortisone-based treatment.⁵⁹ For a brief period, the medication appeared to produce a remarkable improvement in Lipatti's condition, creating the illusion of possible recovery. Encouraged by this temporary stabilisation, his physician and close friend, Henri Dubois-Ferrière, informed Columbia producer Walter Legge that Dinu Lipatti seemed sufficiently recovered to resume recording activities postponed due to illness.

As a result, during the first half of July 1950, Lipatti returned to the recording studio in Geneva for what would become his final recording sessions. These included Chopin's Waltzes, the Mazurka Op. 50 No. 3⁶⁰, Bach's Partita in B-flat major and Siciliana, Mozart's Sonata K. 310 in

Meanwhile, in Bucharest, rumours have spread that she had attempted to traffic gold. As a result, my brother is no longer considered eligible for any kind of professional position. Such is the real situation. And from here, in Switzerland, I can do nothing but pray and wait." Dinu Lipatti.2017. „Letter to Nadia Boulanger, January 31, 1950" in *Letters [Scrisori]*, vol. I, București: Grafoart, p. 470.

⁵⁷ A significant discographic controversy emerged around Lipatti's performance of Chopin's Piano Concerto in E minor given in Zürich on 7 February 1950. In 1965, EMI released a recording mistakenly identified as documenting this concert; however, in 1981, attentive listeners discovered that the performance was in fact identical to an earlier Supraphon recording made in 1955 by the Polish pianist Halina Czerny-Stefańska. Following the exposure of the error, Marc Gertsch revealed the existence of an amateur off-air tape preserving the authentic 1950 Zürich radio broadcast. Although the surviving source suffered from the technical limitations typical of private radio recordings of the period, including interference, cuts, and reduced sound quality, the genuine performance was later restored and issued.

The Piano Files. 2025, February 7. „Dinu Lipatti plays Chopin's Piano Concerto No. 1 in E minor live in Zurich, February 7, 1950." Retrieved May 10, 2026, from

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QHUKIRHQ63Q&list=RDOHUKIRHQ63Q&start_radio=1.

⁵⁸ A Radio recording of Dinu Lipatti's 22 February 1950 Geneva performance of Schumann's Piano Concerto under Ernest Ansermet remained unpublished in Swiss archives for many years before its eventual release by Decca in 1970, partly because of contractual complications and the existence of Lipatti's earlier studio recording with H. von Karajan. Given the conditions of severe illness, the live performance was later described by Ansermet as physically uncertain to complete, and it reveals a more emotionally intense and expressive interpretation than the more restrained 1948 studio version. Mark Ainley.2025, December 2. „Beyond the Myths. The Evolving Legacy of Dinu Lipatti" in The Piano Files. Retrieved May 11, 2026, from <https://www.thepianofiles.com/beyond-the-myths-the-evolving-legacy-of-dinu-lipatti/>.

⁵⁹ Dinu Lipatti.2017. „Letter to Florica Musicescu, July 14, 1950" in *Letters [Scrisori]*, vol. I, București: Grafoart, p. 364.

⁶⁰ Warner Classics.Dinu Lipatti – subject . 2017, February 20. „Mazurka no.32 in C-sharp" [by. Fr. Chopin], 1950, remastered 1997 by Parlophone Records Limited. Retrieved May 6, 2026, from <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=y5kAPzIQ6qA>.

A minor, and several Bach chorales, including *Jesus bleibet meine Freude*. The recordings reveal an extraordinary concentration of expression and technical clarity, often interpreted as the culmination of Dinu Lipatti's mature artistic style.

Plans were even made for *another recording session scheduled for October, devoted to works by Bach, Beethoven, and Schumann*, but the worsening of his condition prevented these projects from ever taking place.⁶¹

On 23 August 1950, Dinu Lipatti gave what would become his final appearance with orchestra at the Lucerne Festival, performing Mozart's *Piano Concerto in C major K.467* under Herbert von Karajan.⁶² Before performing, Dinu Lipatti described these cadenzas in an interview with Henri Jaton as stylistic provocations but as attempts to remain faithful to Mozart's musical language while integrating the technical and sonorous possibilities of the modern piano. Acknowledging the lost tradition of spontaneous improvisation in twentieth-century performance practice, Lipatti characterised his written cadenzas as a form of "improvisation on paper," balancing historical continuity with contemporary pianistic expression.⁶³

2.4.3. September to December 1950

At the same time, his connection to pedagogy had not entirely disappeared. Conscious that his health no longer allowed him to sustain regular conservatory teaching, *together with Nadia Boulanger he nevertheless began planning a series of selective interpretation masterclasses for advanced students at the Geneva Conservatory*⁶⁴, revealing his continued desire to impart artistic principles even as he withdrew from institutional academic life.

Less than a month later, on 16 September, he presented the recital at Besançon⁶⁵ that would later acquire legendary status as his final public performance. The program included *Bach's Partita in B-flat major*, *Mozart's Sonata K. 310*, two *Schubert Impromptus*, and *Chopin's Waltzes*. After the thirteenth waltz, Dinu Lipatti stopped playing and did not continue to the final piece of the cycle. A long silence followed as the audience remained unwilling to leave the hall. Returning

⁶¹ In October, Columbia planned Lipatti's return to the recording studio for a new series of sessions that were to include Beethoven's *Waldstein Sonata*, *Bach-Busoni's Toccata*, and *Schumann's Symphonic Etudes*. Dinu Lipatti.2017. „Letter to Florica Musicescu, July 14, 1950" in *Letters [Scrisori]*, vol. I, București: Grafoart, p. 364.

⁶² Musizieren. 2020, August 20. „Mozart Piano Concerto no. 21 in C major, k. 467", Dinu Lipatti-piano; Herbert von Karajan-conductor, Lucerne Festival Orchestra, August 23, 1950, live performance recording. Retrieved May 6, 2026, from https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=X4N_F5JvTc.

⁶³ Mark Ainley. 2018, August 23. „Dinu Lipatti: Interview and Final Concerto Appearance" in *The Piano Files*. Retrieved May 4, 2026, from <https://www.thepianofiles.com/dinu-lipatti-interview-and-final-concerto-appearance/>.

⁶⁴ „Dear Director, with Nadia Boulanger's permission, I have prepared a project, a copy of which I am sending to you, planned to take place between 10 and 20 April 1951. It seems wonderful to me that a personality such as hers might offer the youth and the Genevan public a portion of her immense erudition, thus replacing the modest aesthetic and musical considerations that would have remained had I conducted this course alone at the piano.

The five sessions would be open to the public and held in the conservatory's main hall. The classes would take place approximately every two days, with the participation of twelve to fifteen student performers selected beforehand by Dinu Lipatti in the presence of Mr. H. Gagnebin through a brief eliminatory examination. The accompaniment for the Beethoven and Bartók concertos would be provided at the second piano by Madeleine Lipatti." Dinu Lipatti.2017. "Letter to Henri Gagnebin, September 11, 1950" in *Letters [Scrisori]*, vol. II, București: Grafoart, p. 419.

⁶⁵ Lipatti's recital in Besançon on 16 September 1950, later regarded as his final public performance, rapidly acquired legendary status after being recorded and broadcast by French radio before its posthumous release in 1957. Frequently celebrated as one of the iconic documents of twentieth-century pianism, the recording circulated for decades through reissues derived from EMI's original 1957 transfer. More recently, however, Solstice Records returned to the original broadcast master tape to produce a more complete, higher-quality edition, restoring not only the musical performance itself but also spoken announcements, audience sounds, and the pianist's warm-up passages preserved in the original transmission. Mark Ainley.2019, March 19. „Dinu Lipatti Birthday tributes" in *The Piano Files*. Retrieved May 4, 2026 from <https://www.thepianofiles.com/dinu-lipatti-birthday-tributes/>.

to the stage, visibly weakened, he performed Bach's chorale *Jesus bleibet meine Freude*, the final work he would ever play in public.⁶⁶ The moment would later become one of the most iconic episodes in twentieth-century pianistic history, often interpreted as the symbolic fusion of artistic transcendence and physical exhaustion.

Only days later, on 24 September, another profoundly emotional event took place when his mother, Anna Lipatti, finally succeeded in leaving Romania after numerous attempts obstructed by the communist security authorities. Her arrival in Geneva allowed mother and son to reunite during the final months of his life, adding a deep personal dimension to the already intense atmosphere surrounding Lipatti's last period.

The pulmonary septicemia that had struck him at the end of September, and whose effects had been partially concealed by the beneficial action of cortisone, progressed deeply throughout October and November. It appears that his final appearance at his personal piano took place while playing the first prelude by Frédéric Chopin and the slow movement from the "Pastorale" by Johann Sebastian Bach, his own transcription, completed in August 1950 after the original organ work, one evening in the last week of November 1950, at his piano at home.⁶⁷

Dinu Lipatti died on 2 December 1950 at Chêne-Bourg, where he was also buried. From a medical and historical perspective, the final complication associated with Dinu Lipatti's death should be understood within the broader context of a prolonged and severely debilitating cancer-type illness. The progressive deterioration of his physical condition and the cumulative effects of repeated treatments had significantly reduced the body's capacity to resist secondary complications during the final stage of his disease.

3. Conclusions

Rather than producing a simple artistic decline, the progression of illness during Dinu Lipatti's final years appears to have generated a process of increasing stylistic concentration and expressive refinement. As physical endurance diminished, his interpretations became marked by a growing economy of gesture, clarity of structure, and control of sonority, qualities especially evident in the late recordings and final public performances.

The study does not seek to encompass every documentary aspect of Dinu Lipatti's final years; instead, it focuses on the major artistic, historical, and personal moments that most clearly support the article's central thesis.

The repertoires chosen during these years,⁶⁸ reveal an attraction to musical forms capable of sustaining transparency, balance, and interior intensity rather than external virtuosity.

Contemporary medical literature confirms that therapeutic options for Hodgkin's disease during the late 1940s remained limited and experimental, relying primarily on radiotherapy, blood

⁶⁶ Warner Classics. Dinu Lipatti. 2023, July 6. „*The Last Recital at Besancon 1950*”, remastered 2023, playlist, provide by Alexandre Bak @1957 Classical Music Reference Recording. Retrieved May 6, 2026, from https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=OLAK5uy_mwZdUWy_EVZw-ots6ZyxDCfhyq6LB1fc.

⁶⁷ It is recounted by one of his biographers, Grigore Bărgăvanu, drawing on testimony from Madeleine Lipatti and also documented in the correspondence between Dinu Lipatti and Nadia Boulanger, in a letter written one week before his death, that this was his final encounter with the piano, in the living room of his home, while gravely ill. Dinu Lipatti.2017. „Letter to Nadia Boulanger, November 24, 1950” in *Letters [Scrisori]*, vol. I, București: Grafoart, p. 500.

⁶⁸ The Piano Files.2017, September 16. „*Dinu Lipatti plays Schubert Impromptu G-major with preluding*”. Retrieved May 5, 2026, from https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9tjtsWoQiw&list=RD9tjtsWoQiw&start_radio=1.

transfusions, and early cortisone treatments, which could sometimes induce temporary remission without ensuring long-term recovery in advanced cases.⁶⁹

In this context, physical limitation did not merely reduce artistic possibilities; it reshaped them. The reduction of unnecessary expressive excess, the precision of phrasing, the disciplined management of tempo, and the luminous restraint characteristic of Dinu Lipatti's late style suggest that illness progressively transformed the very conditions of interpretation, producing an artistic language of concentration in which technical economy and expressive depth became inseparable.

The posthumous image of Dinu Lipatti emerged gradually through the intersection of recordings, memorial writings, critical discourse, and the emotional impact of his premature death, eventually consolidating the figure of the mythical artist within twentieth-century musical culture. Central to this construction was the tendency to interpret Dinu Lipatti's final years through a symbolic framework in which artistic perfection, physical suffering, spiritual dignity, and early death became inseparable elements of a single narrative.

The Recital at Besançon, retrospectively elevated into an almost ritualised final appearance, played a decisive role in shaping this mythology, especially through later descriptions emphasising transcendence, sacrifice, and artistic serenity in the face of death.

Yet the persistence of this image has often obscured the more complex historical reality documented in letters, contracts, medical treatments, rehearsal schedules, recording sessions, financial concerns, and unfinished professional projects. Archival evidence reveals not an abstract symbol detached from ordinary realities, but a musician continuously negotiating fatigue, uncertainty, institutional obligations, and artistic satisfaction.

The challenge for contemporary scholarship is therefore not to dismantle the Lipatti myth, but to establish a more balanced relationship between the legend and documents. The emotional power of the posthumous narrative remains inseparable from the extraordinary artistic quality of the surviving performances, yet these performances acquire deeper historical meaning when reinserted into the concrete chronology of illness, labour, travel, and artistic discipline that shaped them. In this sense, the figure of Lipatti as a pure artist becomes most convincing not as a romantic abstraction, but precisely as the result of an intense human struggle documented across the final years of his life.

The final years of Dinu Lipatti can thus be understood not simply as the narrative of a musician progressively defeated by illness, but as the transformation of physical constraint into an interpretative aesthetics of essentialization. As the possibilities for virtuoso expansion and sustained physical endurance diminished, *Dinu Lipatti's artistic language evolved toward greater concentration, structural clarity, expressive restraint, and refined detail.* The repertoire privileged during these years, the economy of tempo fluctuation, the controlled sonority of the late recordings, and the selective reduction of public appearances all suggest *a process through which limitation itself became integrated into distilled artistic expression.*

In this perspective, illness did not merely accompany the final phase of Dinu Lipatti's career; it actively reshaped the conditions of interpretation, contributing to the emergence of a late style founded on precision, interiority, and expressive distillation. Such an approach allows the final years to be interpreted not as an epilogue of decline, but as a coherent and historically documentable phase of artistic redefinition.

⁶⁹ Bernard Straus, Abraham A. Jacobson, Solomon A. Berson, Theodor C. Bernstein, Robert S. Fadem, Rosalyn S. Yalow. 1952. "The Effect of Cortisone in Hodgkin's Disease" in *The American Journal of Medicine*, 12(2), 184–195. Retrieved May 6, 2026, from [https://www.amjmed.com/article/0002-9343\(52\)90210-6/abstract](https://www.amjmed.com/article/0002-9343(52)90210-6/abstract).

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This pedagogical inheritance has deeply influenced not only the documentary and historical interest that motivated the present research, but also a broader understanding of the interpretative values, artistic discipline, and educational traditions associated with the Romanian piano school.

The author remains especially grateful for the opportunity to carry forward and transmit this legacy through his own activity both as a concert pianist and as a university pedagogue in Romania.

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