

Frank Salomon Associates

Your partner for the most exceptional musical experiences

Los Angeles Times

Pianist Lise de la Salle shines with the L.A. Phil

By Rick Schultz, February 1, 2013

“De la Salle made listeners forget about bravura technique, even while dazzlingly conjuring the violinist’s legendary devilish playing in the off-beat syncopations of the 9th variation or evoking his dancing left-hand pizzicato in the 19th. Noseda and the Philharmonic maintained impressive balance, matching her virtuosity and warm lyricism note for note.”

The Italian conductor Gianandrea Noseda, making his Los Angeles Philharmonic debut at Walt Disney Concert Hall on Thursday, brought an exhilarating, Russian-sounding fervor to an all-Rachmaninoff program. No wonder Noseda became the first foreigner chosen as principal guest conductor of St. Petersburg’s Mariinsky Theatre in 1997. (He was last seen here in 2001, conducting “The Queen of Spades” for Los Angeles Opera.)

Beginning with “Isle of the Dead,” Noseda’s carefully shaped account grew more frenzied. He conveyed the work’s somber tidal pull, and persuasively expressed its drama and melancholy. The Philharmonic responded magnificently to his theatrical podium style.

The concert’s centerpiece was a powerhouse performance of the “Rhapsody on a Theme of Paganini,” featuring the brilliant 24-year-old French pianist Lise de la Salle. On Tuesday she gave a hair-raising performance of Schumann’s Piano Quintet with members of the Philharmonic’s Chamber Music Society.

Rachmaninoff’s “Rhapsody” – actually 24 variations based on the last of Paganini’s 24 caprices for solo violin – is among the most difficult in the pianist’s repertoire.

But De la Salle made listeners forget about bravura technique, even while dazzlingly conjuring the violinist’s legendary devilish playing in the off-beat syncopations of the 9th variation or evoking his dancing left-hand pizzicato in the 19th. Noseda and the Philharmonic maintained impressive balance, matching her virtuosity and warm lyricism note for note.

After intermission, Noseda gave an intense reading of the Symphony No. 3, gripping in its forward sweep. Leaner string textures helped keep the nostalgic element from cloying. It was a reading of real bite, with the major moment of repose coming in a touching central Adagio.

Throughout, Noseda made organic sense of the score’s hard-surfaced abstractions, never allowing the

Lise de la Salle

Frank Salomon Associates

Your partner for the most exceptional musical experiences

composer's melodies, lovely as they are, to impede momentum. The effect was bracingly modern.

Incidentally, during intermission people in the store at Disney Hall looking for a souvenir CD of De la Salle playing the "Rhapsody" were disappointed. **A quick chat with her revealed good and not-so-good news: she plans to record it within the next five years.**

Lise de la Salle