Lise de la Salle Returns To Provide Spring In Our Steps

Described by Bryce Morrison of Gramophone magazine as “a talent in a million,” French pianist Lise de la Salle returns on Saturday, April 22, 2017 in response to the popular acclaim following her triumphant Friends of Music Concerts debut two years ago. Her program will include Liszt transcriptions of works by Robert Schumann and Franz Schubert, Robert Schumann's Fantasie in C Major, Op. 17, and ten pieces from Sergei Prokofiev’s Romeo and Juliette Suite for Piano, Op. 75.

In just a few years, through her international concert appearances and her award-winning Naïve recordings, Ms. de la Salle has established a reputation as one of today’s most exciting young artists, and as a musician of uncommon sensibility and maturity. Of a recent appearance, The New York Times said, “[She] has a powerful technique; she stormed through Liszt’s crashing torrents of chords and whirlwind runs with panache. But she also demonstrated a poetic musicality in the more introspective interludes, which she enhanced with colorful shading and phrasing.” David Rohde of DC Metro Theater Arts said of her January 2017 performance at The Phillips Collection, “Her nearly complete triumph with the music continued on page 2
Lauded by the *Chicago Tribune* for its “expert musicianship, razor-sharp ensemble, deep musical feeling, and palpable commitment to communication,” the young *Dover Quartet* will debut with Friends of Music Concerts on Saturday, May 6. The group’s program will include Beethoven’s String Quartet in F minor, Opus 95 (“Serioso”); Britten’s String Quartet No. 2 in C Major, Opus 36; and Shostakovich’s Quartet No. 2 in A Major, Opus 68.

The Dover Quartet catapulted to international stardom following a stunning sweep of the 2013 Banff International String Quartet Competition, becoming one of the most in-demand ensembles in the world. *The New Yorker* recently dubbed them “the young American string quartet of the moment,” and *The Strad* raved that the Quartet is “already pulling away from their peers with their exceptional interpretive maturity, tonal refinement, and taut ensemble.”

The Dover has continued to receive accolades: in 2015 the group was awarded the highly prestigious Cleveland Quartet Award; shortly thereafter, Lincoln Center awarded the Quartet the annual Hunt Family Award, as part of the organization’s Emerging Artist Awards. In 2013-14 the Quartet was the first ever Quartet-in-Residence for the venerated Curtis Institute of Music. It now is faculty Quartet-in-Residence at Northwestern University’s Bienen School of Music.

Violinists Joel Link and Bryan Lee, violist Milena Pajaro-Van de Stadt, and cellist Camden Shaw formed the Quartet in 2008 at Curtis Institute. Their subsequent performances have taken them throughout the United States, Canada, Europe, and the Middle East, as well as to some of this continent’s most prestigious music festivals. The first of three planned CDs, *Tribute: Dover Quartet Plays Mozart*, was released last fall to universal acclaim.

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**La Salle, continued from page 1**

of Franz Liszt, Robert Schumann, and Sergei Prokofiev had the highly engaged Phillips audience hanging on every note even more than usual.”

In addition to gracing the Friends of Music stage, Ms. de la Salle has appeared this season with leading symphonic ensembles in Paris and Germany; in the United States she has performed with the National Symphony in Washington, DC, the Minnesota Orchestra and the orchestras of Des Moines, Knoxville, and Toledo, among others. Additional recitals and chamber music performances were scheduled in Washington, DC, Fresno, CA, Detroit, MI, and other cities around the country.
A Violin Grows in Brooklyn

At his home workshop in the Park Slope section of Brooklyn, Sam Zygmuntowicz crafts instruments coveted by string musicians from around the world. He’s been doing so since 1985, making instruments by advance commission by performers such as Cho-Liang Lin, Joshua Bell, Maxim Vengerov, Yo-Yo Ma, Leila Josefowicz, Isaac Stern, and David Finckle. The Harper Collins book *The Violinmaker* documents his making of a violin for the Emerson String Quartet’s Eugene Drucker.

Zygmuntowicz was already a prize-winning sculptor before starting his instrument-making studies at age 13. He is a graduate of the SLC Violinmaking School, and studied advanced violin making and restoration with Carl Becker and Rene Morel. His faithful copies of classic violins won early acclaim, and he has designed many personal models as well.

In addition to his extensive studies of traditional violinmaking, often featured in *The Strad* magazine, he has worked closely with acoustic researchers. He often is on staff at both the Violinmaking and Violin Acoustics Workshops at Oberlin College where, with Strad3D, he has helped bring together an inspiring group of scientists, violinmakers, musicians, filmmakers, and designers. They use CAT scans, laser imaging, and acoustic analysis to learn how violins made by the old masters work.

And he has been applying that research to his own Brooklyn studio. “New technologies have made possible analysis that couldn’t have been done 20 years ago,” he said in a recent NPR interview. To illustrate, he chose, from among an array of beautiful and precious instruments atop his grand piano, the 1735 “Plowden” Guarneri del Gesu violin, said to be one of that maker’s finest instruments. Suspending it on an open frame, he gently released a small hammer that tapped the side of the violin’s bridge; the tap was recorded on a computer, which displayed a waveform graph. “That one little tap basically contains the full spectral response of the instrument,” he said. “A small tap can be as good as a symphony.”

He builds about six instruments a year, many of which are “clones” of an ancient instrument. “It turns out that things that work very well are also very beautiful,” he says. His goal is to make each instrument the one of choice for its owner.

On May 6th we will have a chance to judge for ourselves. Camden Shaw, the cellist in the Dover Quartet, performs on a Sam Zygmuntowicz instrument.

What Have They Done Lately? *continued on back cover*

The cellist Zuill Bailey, whose recital for us in April 2012 included works by Bach, Brahms, and Chopin, won a 2017 Grammy Award for “Best Classical Instrumental Solo” for his live recording on the Naxos label of Michael Daugherty’s *Tales of Hemingway* with the Nashville Symphony Orchestra and music director Giancarlo Guerrero. Of Daugherty’s work, David Hurwitz of Classics Today said: “[It] does exactly what a good modern cello concerto is supposed to do: it exploits every facet in the solo’s expressive range, from soulful melody to virtuoso pyrotechnics, and it gives Zuill Bailey a rich
Each November members of the Friends of Music Concerts Board go to the Young Concert Artists International Auditions in the hopes of selecting a musician or ensemble for our Performance Award. The auditions never have disappointed. They bring together extraordinary young performers not only from around this country but from around the world. Judges often find it difficult to make selections. And then, FOM Board members often have a hard time choosing our own awardee from among the winners.

Young Concert Artists was founded in 1961 by Susan Wadsworth, who continues as its leader today. She wanted to nurture young classical artists, providing support as they embarked upon the competitive world of musical performance. YCA hears musicians in various solo instruments and voice, as well as chamber ensembles; there is no limit on the number of artists who can win; and the participants are competing against a standard of excellence – not each other. Professional musicians in the performing category (e.g. string players for strings, pianists for pianos) are among the judges.

Winners are presented in debut recitals in the Young Concert Artists Series in New York in Merkin Concert Hall and in Washington DC at the Kennedy Center as well as in Boston’s Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum’s Young Concert Artists Series. They also receive all management services, which schedule recitals, educational activities, and concerto appearances with orchestras throughout the United States and abroad, as well as publicity materials, promotion, career guidance and development.

This past November’s auditions were typical.

Starting at 9 am and going through to 6 pm (with a brief break for lunch), twelve musicians who had survived regional auditions performed. Each had prepared several works to play from memory. Each chose one to perform in its entirety that might best showcase his or her talent. Then the judges asked them to play movements or parts of the other works the artist had prepared, e.g. the scherzo from this or the adagio from that. There were string players, woodwind performers, a lovely harpist, several pianists; they ranged in age from almost 15 to 26 or 27. Musicians who needed them were provided with piano collaborators.

FOM Board members were enthralled. Although they liked some performers better than others, all seemed just amazing. Our ears and hearts were filled with gratitude for this day of musical delights.

In the end, the judges selected four winners: Benjamin Baker, a violinist originally from New Zealand who currently is studying in London; Xavier Foley, a double bassist and composer originally from Marietta, GA, who earned his Bachelor of Music from the Curtis Institute in Philadelphia in 2016; Nathan Lee, an already seasoned 15-year-old pianist who lives outside Seattle, Washington; and Anthony Trionfo, a 21-year-old flutist from Michigan who studies at the Colburn Conservatory of Music in Los Angeles. Although it was hard for our Board members to choose from among those winners, we did select Nathan Lee as our performance awardee. By the time we can fit him onto our roster, he will be all of 17 years old. We expect that our audience will be as blown away by him as we were. Stay tuned.
It’s fitting that, at a time when Chamber Music America has opened its arms to small jazz ensembles, Windscape will perform a jazz-oriented program for our Friends of Music Concerts audience on Saturday, May 20. It will include arrangements of Armstrong’s Yes I’m In the Barrel, Stravinsky’s Ragtime, excerpts from Weill’s Three-Penny Opera, three Brazilian Choros by Nazareth/Abreu, and three virtuoso Etudes by George Gershwin, as well as Hindemith’s Kleine Kammermusik, Op. 24, No. 2, and Villa-Lobos’s Quintette (en forme de Choros).

Created in 1994 by five eminent wind soloists, Windscape has won a unique place for itself as a vibrant, ever-evolving group of musical individualists: an “unquintet” that has delighted audiences throughout the United States, Canada, Mexico, and Asia. “Knowledgeable, musically impeccable, and breathtakingly beautiful,” enthused Classical Voice of North Carolina. “A large audience thoroughly enjoyed the performance,” reported New Zealand’s Dunedin Star, which went on to say, “In addition to their superb musicianship, Windscape were gracious hosts, illustrating their performance with often humorous anecdotes of the life and times of the composers.”

As Artists-in-Residence at Manhattan School of Music, the members of Windscape are master teachers, imparting not only the secrets of instrumental virtuosity but also presenting a distinctive concert series, hailed for its creative energy and musical curiosity. Through it, the ensemble has devised new, sometimes startling programs, and has experimented with new arrangements and repertoire combinations.

During a recent season, Windscape collaborated with the Orion String Quartet in the late flutist Samuel Baron’s brilliant transcription for string quartet and wind quintet of Bach’s The Art of Fugue. Other esteemed musicians with whom they have collaborated include Andre Michel Schub, Jon Kimura Parker, and Jeremy Denk.

Windscape Brings Us Out of the Box to “The Roaring Twenties”

Reluctantly, a Price Increase

Increasing costs have led the all-volunteer Friends of Music Concerts Board of Directors to the conclusion that both subscription and single ticket costs for the 2017-2018 season must be increased. Thus, subscriptions for the entire six-concert series will rise from $120.00 to $140.00 (or $23.50 per concert), while tickets for individual concerts alone will increase from $30.00 to $35.00 each. Students ages 18 and under will continue to be admitted free of charge.

Two main criteria entered into this decision. First was the desire to maintain the quality and variety of the artists Friends of Music Concerts brings to our audiences; we believe the new season announced on this newsletter’s first page is evidence of that. Second was the necessity of increasing revenues while still keeping the concerts affordable.

In addition to grants from outside sources, such as those from Westchester County and the New York State Council for the Arts (NYSCA), we have relied on contributions from our subscribers and other audience members over and above their attendance costs to help close our revenue gaps. We look forward to that continuing generosity and support.
What Have They Done Lately?

Continued from page 3

opportunity to show off his impressive technique and seductive timbre amid the most wide-ranging and colorful accompaniments.”

The recording also won in the category “Best Contemporary Classical Composition.”

Violinist Paul Huang, recipient of our 2011 Performance Award, received a 2015 Avery Fisher Career Grant and a 2017 Lincoln Center Award for Emerging Artists. Last season he made his Lincoln Center’s Great Performers debut when he stepped in for Midori with Leonard Slatkin and the Detroit Symphony.

The Ukrainian violinist Aleksey Semenenko, recipient of our fifth Performance Award, made a triumphant appearance in March 2017 at the Morgan Library’s noontime concert series. He and his piano collaborator Inna Firsova performed works by Beethoven, Tchaikovsky, Franck, and Wieniawski, with a Debussy encore, receiving standing ovations from the sold-out crowd. This season his schedule has taken him throughout Europe and the United States.

Friends of Music Notes is a publication of Friends of Music Concerts, Inc., P.O. Box 675, Millwood, NY 10546, an all-volunteer, non-profit organization. For more information about us and our upcoming concerts, please visit our web site: www.friendsofmusicconcerts.org.

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Pianos by Steinway.