

 **Celebrity Series of Boston**



***Boston Recital Debut***

RAVEL - Miroirs

DEBUSSY – Preludes

*Les Fées sont d'exquises Danseuses*

*Les Sons et les Parfums toument dans l'Air du Soir*

*Ce qu'a vu le Vent d'Ouest*

*Des Pas sur la Neige*

*La Danse de Puck*

*Feux d'Artifice*

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BEETHOVEN - Sonata 26 "Les Adieux"

BEETHOVEN - Sonata 14 "Moonlight"

JORDAN HALL | Saturday 28 January 2012 | 8 PM

***HIGHLIGHTS:***

"De la Salle shows perfect touch in recital debut... the focus of energy was the point of contact between finger and key."

*BOSTON GLOBE*

"a genius at the keyboard"

*BOSTON MUSICAL INTELLIGENCER*

"a connoisseur's delight... it was magical."

*BOSTON CLASSICAL REVIEW*



## De la Salle shows perfect touch in recital debut

CONCERT REVIEW | January 30, 2012 | By Matthew Guerrieri | [LINK](#)



HIROYUKI ITO FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES/FILE 2007 Lise de la Salle (pictured in New York in 2007) played a program from Ravel to Debussy, Beethoven to Prokofiev, in her Boston recital debut at Jordan Hall on Saturday.

The physical connection between pianist and piano takes varied forms. Some pianists press deep into the keyboard for an organ-like sonority; some seem to pull the vibrations of the strings into their hands. But in Lise de la Salle's excellent Celebrity Series concert on Saturday - the French pianist's Boston recital debut - ***the focus of energy was the point of contact between finger and key. The effect was both vintage, foregrounding a clavichord-like primacy of touch, and modern, clarity as an illusion of objectivity.***

Maurice Ravel's "Miroirs" was bright, busy, transparent, less a wash of sound than a precisely crosshatched etching. The moths' wings in "Noctuelles" rustled close-up and percussive; "Une barque sur l'océan" evoked the busy glint of light off the wave's surface more than its deep roll. Relying on fast, even passagework, de la Salle often eschewed the sustain pedal; "Alborada del gracioso" had a guitar's dry jangling. But elsewhere, the pedal was held down for the illusion of echoing distance, faraway birds' cries in "Oiseaux tristes" or the tolling in "La vallée des cloches."

It brought out the neoclassical formality intrinsic to Ravel's music; interestingly, it also located a similar quality in Ravel's more Romantic forebear Claude Debussy. *In a set of six of Debussy's "Préludes," de la Salle translated Impressionistic images into crisp, discrete pianistic language.*

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“Les sons et les parfums tournent dans l’air du soir” conjured a cool, brisk atmosphere; the winter landscape of “Des pas sur la neige” was even more austere and frozen than usual.

The all-Beethoven second half emphasized that composer’s flair for musical inexorability. The E-flat major “Les Adieux” Sonata (Op. 81a) played the piano’s decay off its athletic demands: the horn-call opening drifting into silence, slow melodies sharply drawn but tenuous, fast sections saturated with attacks, raging against the dying of the sound. The opening of the familiar C-sharp minor “Moonlight” Sonata (Op. 27, No. 2) found a quietly tense equilibrium between momentum and emphasis; the finale amplified that contrast, rubato sentiment repeatedly swept away by bursts of impacable speed.

Encores were dialectically paired off: a high-octane “Presto” from Bach’s Italian Concerto chased by Chopin’s posthumous C-sharp-minor Nocturne, lucid and icy; “Montagues and Capulets,” from Prokofiev’s “Romeo and Juliet,” heavy and glittering and dark as a lump of uranium, balanced by a guileless reading of Schumann’s “Von fremden Ländern und Menschen.” It was a soft landing after flights of fierce, tactile thoughtfulness.

# BOSTON CLASSICAL REVIEW

## De la Salle moves from cool to fiery in Boston recital debut

CONCERT REVIEW | By Keith Powers | January 29, 2012 | [LINK](#)

**In a moment she was transformed, from cool clinician into stormy adventurer.**

Saturday evening's Celebrity Series event at Jordan Hall brought French pianist Lise de la Salle to town, featured two different musical sides of the 23-year-old Parisienne.

The first, on display throughout the published program, was introspective and almost aloof. Ravel's *Miroirs*, a half dozen Debussy Preludes, and two Beethoven sonatas (*Les Adieux* and *Moonlight*) were all delivered with artistry and care, but also with surgical precision.

Truth be told, it wasn't her, it was the music. The French portion featured impressionistic, non-linear compositions that kept de la Salle's prodigious physical talents under wraps. No finger-stretching octaves, no blazing runs, just **carefully sketched-out phrases and musical allusions requiring deep attention from everyone in the room, not just the artist.**

***It was magical.*** *Miroirs* shows off five personalities, and de la Salle inhabited each one like it was her own. A stalwart left hand, now bolting down the bass line, then reaching over delicately for overhand accents, finally venturing some complex rubato, was riveting. In-between, her right hand investigated Ravel's shifting motives, some long phrases that required an artist's sensibility to come to life, others wisps of ideas that came and left. *Alborada del gracioso*, a Spanish flavored aubade had the most charm, yet all proved engaging.

De la Salle assembled a pastiche from Debussy's two books of Preludes, stitching together half a dozen with no regard to the composer's sequence. Her choices kept the mood quiet, with only a mild crescendo, coming from *Feux d'artifice*, the published finale, at the center of the set. Up to this point, the program was extraordinarily delicate, sonically reserved, though de la Salle's concentration carried across the stage.

Her Beethoven was substantial but less compelling. *Les Adieux* can be a challenge, even for late career artists. Its emotional power mixes farewell with appreciation, not exactly black and white, as Alfred Brendel once pointed out. A chance to carefully delineate the differences in the two themes of the first movement, one slow, in three chordal accents, the other freer and faster, was not articulated as well as it could have been. Both subjects return repeatedly, and subsequent fingerings marked their differences more distinctly.

***The Moonlight sonata was a connoisseur's delight.*** Often over-emoted, imbued by passions from anxious interpreters, de la Salle instead kept to the score, observing its gentle dynamics. The brief second movement again allowed for sophisticated rubato. The finale hinted at the *unbuttoned encores to come, passionate, frisky and lovingly joyful offerings of Bach, Chopin, Prokofiev and Schumann.*

# BOSTON CLASSICAL REVIEW

## French pianist set to make her Boston recital debut

CONCERT PREVIEW | By Keith Powers | January 24, 2012 | [LINK](#)

“It’s schizophrenic to be an idol onstage and then have nobody to talk to when the concert is over.”

Lise de la Salle has been a high-profile presence on the music scene for most of her years, since the 23-year-old French pianist made her Radio France debut at age 9. Yet she also has a firm grasp on the difficulties of balancing performing and a “normal” life.

That’s not always such an easy thing with an international itinerary as busy as that of the young Parisian, who will make her Boston recital debut Saturday night at Jordan Hall for the Celebrity Series.

She spoke on the phone from Kyoto, where she was performing a Saint-Saens concerto with Roberto Benzi; right after Boston she travels to Montreal, then back across the pond to Lucerne.

“As important as music is for me,” she says, “it helps the music to have something that comes directly from life. Being artistic is normal for me. My grandfather is an artist, my mother is a painter. I love painting and I go to museums whenever I can while I’m traveling.

“But when I’m home, I feel lucky to be with friends, to not plan or do anything special. I’m also lucky that since I’ve traveled so much, I know people wherever I go, and I have friends in lots of places now.”

Unlike many young artists on the career fast track, de la Salle has kept the number of her appearances limited and resisted the urge to pack her calendar. “The number of concerts haven’t increased for me lately—I prefer to play about sixty or sixty-five a year. I have a great deal of respect for my colleagues who play one hundred times a year or more, but that’s not for me. In the past two years the number of concerts has not increased for me, but the quality has. It’s going in a good direction.”

This weekend’s recital marks her second Boston appearance. The first, in November 2009, was a well-received Boston Symphony Orchestra performance of the Saint-Saens Piano Concerto No. 2, with Fabio Luisi, a favorite podium collaborator. “I’ve done so many important concerts with him,” she says of the Italian conductor. “In Boston, and last November my debut at Avery Fisher in New York. I have a fantastic relationship with him as a musician and as a human being. I feel like he knows what I want, that we’re on the same level. We don’t even speak that much in rehearsals—we see and feel music in the same way.”

For Saturday’s recital, de la Salle will open with music of Ravel and Debussy and follow that with two familiar Beethoven sonatas—*Moonlight* and *Les Adieux*—after intermission.

“The idea was to play French music in the first half,” she says, “but then to do something unique afterward. It’s my first big Boston solo recital, and I wanted it to have a combination of elements. I have basic programs, but I always change them, depending on where I’m playing, what CDs have just come out, which country I’m in.

“As far as composers and repertoire are concerned, I don’t want to specialize. Even if I feel closer to Mozart or Beethoven, I still have Liszt and Prokofiev. I play everything from Bach to Messiaen, and I really love it all.

“In the next few years, I would love to do all the Beethoven concertos, maybe in three concerts in a row. But I still have two more to learn, and at the moment there is plenty to do.”

**Lise de la Salle performs Ravel, Debussy and Beethoven 8 p.m. Saturday at Jordan Hall. Tickets are available at [celebrityseries.org](http://celebrityseries.org) or by calling 617-482-6661.**

# The Boston Musical Intelligencer

a virtual journal and blog of the classical music scene in Boston  
Robert Lewis, editor; Bettina A. Norton, executive editor; Lee Ellerman, publisher

CONCERT REVIEW (Excerpt\*) | By David Patterson | January 29, 2012 | [LINK](#)

Lise de la Salle's Boston recital debut last night at Jordan Hall, presented by Celebrity Series, began with **a genius at the keyboard** expounding on Ravel's Miroirs. Admittedly, **her performance had me in tears, those that come with an awakening in life.** Spasms of mirth, of sentimentality, and of nobility inherent in the Frenchman's score were everywhere evident and at times rendered forth in the boldest, most remarkable power I have yet to encounter. ***The 23-year old de la Salle — yes! — delivered an incomparable message of piano passion and personality.***

*David Patterson, Professor of Music and former Chairman of the Performing Arts Department at UMass Boston, was recipient of a Fulbright Scholar Award and the Chancellor's Distinction in Teaching Award. He studied with Nadia Boulanger and Olivier Messiaen in Paris and holds a PhD from Harvard University. [www.notescape.net](http://www.notescape.net)*

\*Portions of text omitted by Artist's Manager.