

Chicago Classical Review

October 1, 2011

Muti and CSO have got a little Liszt

By Lawrence A. Johnson

review extract

For the second week of Riccardo Muti's second season, the Italian conductor and the Chicago Symphony Orchestra presented a Largely Liszt program marking next month's 200th anniversary of the Hungarian composer's birth.

It's been 25 years since Michele Campanella's only previous CSO performance when he tackled the sprawling Busoni Piano Concerto (Sir Charles Mackerras conducted). In two appearances, the Italian pianist has spanned the genre, going from the longest piano concerto in the repertoire to the shortest with the single-movement Liszt First Concerto.

With its banal themes, heavy-handed scoring and bursts of keyboard flash, it's hard to account for how a work of such awe-inspiring crassness stays in the regular repertoire. The principal virtue of Liszt's showpiece, written for his own show-offy concerts with orchestra, is its relative brevity.

Campanella's bona fides as a Liszt advocate were clear in the refined expression he brought to the fleeting lyrical moments and the jaunty vivacity of his playing in the final section.

Chicago on the Aisle.com

October 1, 2011

Review: Chicago Symphony Orchestra. Riccardo Muti, conductor; Michele Campanella, piano. Through Oct. 4, 2011, at Orchestra Hall.

By Lawrence B. Johnson

review extract

Speaking of fiends, [pianist Michele Campanella](#) tamed one in style with his devil-may-care romp through Liszt's Piano Concerto No. 1 in E-flat. The piece is so much fun, and so hard. But the veteran Campanella – who is president of the Società Liszt, the Italian chapter of the [American Liszt Society](#) – tossed it off with imposing strength, shimmering runs and an unflappable élan. Muti and company supported him in the spirit of Liszt's flamboyant design: chamber music splashed large.

Chicago Tribune
October 2, 2011

Muti, CSO pay eloquent homage to the Franz Liszt bicentennial

By John von Rhein

review extract

The [Chicago Symphony Orchestra](#) is devoting a sizable portion of its current season to works composed 100 years ago, during a period that witnessed extraordinary creative ferment in music. The year 1911 marked a major turning point – the death of [Gustav Mahler](#), a key figure in the evolution from post-Romanticism to modernism. [Riccardo Muti](#) and other conductors will pay extended homage to the composer, beginning with the maestro's concerts next weekend.

Italian pianist Michele Campanella, an experienced Lisztian, summoned the requisite daredevil thunder, also the lyrical poetry, where required.

Chicago Sun-Times

October 3, 2011

Chicago Symphony Orchestra re-creates 1911 homage to Liszt

By Andrew Patner

review extract

Muti invited his close Italian colleague and Liszt devotee Michele Campanella to make a rare U.S. appearance in the 20-minute piano concerto. Campanella, whose only previous CSO outing was 25 years ago in a real rarity, Ferruccio Busoni's concerto, is something of a fanatic; he is playing only Liszt this year in his many international engagements. But he's the sort of a fanatic who takes you somewhere near what the composer might have intended rather than into the extremes of personal or stylized passion.

....he made this overplayed, too often manipulated piece attractive and brought out its unusual structure of continuous development.