

Arthur Houle, pianist

Representative reviews

“ 'A funny thing happened to me on the way to breakfast this morning,' Arthur Houle regaled a packed audience...before he sat down to play a Chopin recital.

The [Sunday morning] call came from a frantic Lucy Scarborough, the [International Chopin Music Festival] director. Stefan Bardas, scheduled pianist for that night's recital, had just informed her he could not appear due to personal problems. Could Houle fill in? He could. An hour later he was on a plane from Caldwell, Idaho...

That night Houle played with the ease and aplomb of a pianist...polishing every sharp & flat in Chopin's repertory...

The laid-back professor...must have his students eating out of his hand, so personable and unaffected is his rapport with listeners...

Houle captured Chopin's spirit and emotion...He took note of the many music students in the audience, warning that he might take liberties with Chopin. Houle has extensively researched the Romantic composer, ...his fingering, the narrower keyboard..., noting that Chopin sometimes improvised during performances...

Houle demonstrated his prowess by switching from the sweet gentle Chopin...to more melodramatic masterpieces like the *Military Polonaise*. Here Houle did not pound the daylights out of the piano...but treated it with the dignity and respect it deserved as the final offering on this very special piano recital...

Best of all, Houle will be back next Tuesday for his scheduled recital..."

-- *El Paso Herald-Post (The International Chopin Music Festival)*

"Houle supported [cellist Dennis Parker] to the hilt and brought...a fine sense of architecture."

-- *The Strad (Carnegie Weill Recital Hall)*

"Dr. Houle...showed himself to be an artist on the level of any of the touring accompanists. This partnership [with violinist Leopold LaFosse] reminded me of the outstanding Leland Chen-Jeffrey Gilliam duo."

-- *North Dakota Music Educator*

"...a performer worth going out to hear -- any time he performs. His strength, grace, vivacity, energy and dexterity gave life to the *Beethoven Piano Concerto #3 in C Minor, Op. 37*."

-- *Grand Forks Herald*

"...Houle played a virtuoso piano concert...of quite varied material...His technical mastery...was amazing...He plays with a clarity and accuracy that is a joy to hear...But...he doesn't let his monumental technique overshadow the very musical nature of his performances...It is rare to hear a pianist play the full range of the instrument...with each note projecting its intended volume... His...Bach...was most enjoyable, especially the fugue in which each voice was clearly stated and easily followed to its destination. Mr. Houle received a well deserved standing ovation..."

-- *The Times, Thief River Falls*

"The flashy *Saint-Saëns Piano Concerto No. 2* added more excitement...in the capable hands of Arthur Houle...His playing was sensitive and secure...and the audience responded with an enthusiastic standing ovation."

-- *The Idaho Statesman*

"Our department presented Arthur Houle in a two-recital presentation of the complete Chopin Nocturnes. The performances were simply outstanding. ...Arthur is an extremely gifted pianist with a deep commitment to...high standards...[His] playing provides a unique voice that melds a deep sense [of] poetic sensitivity with astute musicological scholarship. His personal interpretation of this repertoire stands in sharp relief to others who emphasize shallow histrionics. While in San Diego, Dr. Houle also gave a seminar on Chopin's performance practices to the local MTNA chapter that drew enthusiastic responses from all who heard him."

-- *Dr. Paul Kenyon, Music Chair & piano faculty, Point Loma Nazarene University*

"Dr. Houle [presented] a total of nine hours of lecture/demonstrations and master classes on classical and jazz improvisation for both teachers and students of various abilities and ages...We found his presentations and classes to be fresh, innovative, vibrant, engaging, clearly communicated, and punctuated throughout with a delightful sense of humor. I've referred to his handouts several times and they have been most helpful to me and to my students. He delivered exactly what was promised. I know of no one who was disappointed.

During the Master Classes where teachers and students of various ages and abilities played for him, he gave several suggestions to each player and complimented them on their overall performance. Each person left feeling confirmed and excited about working with the new ideas that he had shared with them.

...Dr. Houle's presentations and master classes received the most compliments of any program that I have scheduled over the past three years and everyone wants to have him back."

-- *Barbara Taylor, Vice President of Programs for Pike's Peak Music Teachers Association, Colorado*

"The extraordinary level of interest in his [Chopin] concert resulted in a sold-out recital hall. Dr. Houle played beautifully and enchanted the audience with his comments. His encores were brilliantly played and the standing ovation...much deserved...it is unusual to find a pianist who can combine scholarly research with artistry...He is...intelligent...articulate and very dedicated..."

-- *Dr. Claire Wachter, piano faculty, University of Oregon*

Quotes/reviews of *Chopin Nocturnes* CD:

“Absolute highest recommendation possible... Stunning...
Music and liner notes are outstanding...”

-- *Boise Weekly*

“Houle is an amazingly adept and expressive musician... Intimate...Recording
quality is excellent...
Merits a close listen...”

-- *Idaho Statesman, Boise*

“I was impressed by the great dynamic range, but was especially glad the very
soft passages were emphasized (as Chopin himself did). The rendition of
Op. 9, No. 2 [with additional embellishments] was very effective.”

-- *Dr. Richard Hudson, author of Stolen Time: The History of Tempo Rubato and
professor of musicology, Department of Musicology, UCLA*

“The *Chopin Nocturnes* CD is beautifully done - tasteful, nicely controlled
dynamically, accurate and obviously backed up by research.”

-- *Professor Kent Kennan, renowned composer and author of The Technique of
Orchestration*

“Dr. Arthur Houle performs the Chopin Nocturnes with a singular combination of
unusual scholarly understanding and extraordinary musical spontaneity.
Supported also by solid technical mastery, this recording is highly
recommended.”

-- *Dr. Walden Hughes, piano, music history and counterpoint faculty, Northwest
Nazarene University, and author of numerous articles on music*