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Alondra de la Parra and Richard Bado make Festival of the Arts BOCA debuts

Brilliant young conductor Alondra de la Parra took over the podium for an indisposed Teodor Currentzis to conduct the Russian National Orchestra with the Galways, Wednesday and Joshua Bell, Friday. This evening, guest conductor, Richard Bado, will conduct Renée Fleming and the Russian National Orchestra.

At only 27 years of age, de la Parra is considered one of today's most exciting conducting talents and one of a handful of women appearing in front of the world's major orchestras. Her rise to fame as one of the few internationally recognized female conductors has been meteoric and the events of the last week are typical of the whirlwind pace of this young woman's life.

IMG artists (who are partners in the Festival) reached de la Parra in Salzburg, Austria, where she was observing conductor world famous conductor, Sir Simon Battle. Timing it seems is everything in a musician's life. De la Parra had signed on with IMG Artists only one week before they called and asked her to come to Festival of the Arts BOCA to replace Teodor Currentzis who was ill. Sir Simon, who has been very supportive of her career, encouraged her to take the assignment. The call came on Friday. On Monday, de la Parra was in Boca rehearsing with the Russian National Orchestra for the first time.

De la Parra has appeared as guest conductor with the Buenos Aires Philharmonic, Uruguay's Montevideo Philharmonic and Mexico's National Symphony Orchestra, among others. Currently Maestro de la Parra is a full-scholarship Master's candidate in Conducting at the Manhattan School of Music where she is the recipient of the Gabe Wiener Merit Fellowship.

Recently, Alondra de la Parra achieved one of her dreams when she debuted as guest conductor of the New York Pops Orchestra at Carnegie Hall. Despite her busy performing and study schedule she realized another dream, by founding the New York-based Philharmonic Orchestra of the Americas, which promotes young soloists and composers from the American continent.

Closing concert

In sharp contrast to Alondra de la Parra, Richard Bado is an accomplished conductor and pianist who accompanies tonight's closing concert star, Renée Fleming, on a regular basis. In fact, the two are friends. They met at the Eastman School of Music in 1980.

Bado now lives in Houston where he is Director of the Opera Studies Program at Rice University's Shepherd School of Music. Ironically, he was at home rehearsing for a recital with Renée Fleming in Greenville, North Carolina, last Thursday, when he got the call to come to Festival of the Arts BOCA.

A native of Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, Richard Bado made his professional conducting debut in 1989 leading Houston Grand Opera's acclaimed production of Show Boat at the newly restored Cairo Opera House in Egypt. Since then, Bado has conducted at Teatro alla Scala, Opéra National de Paris, Houston Grand Opera, New York City Opera, among others. He has also accompanied Cecilia Bartoli, Frederica von Stade, Denyce Graves, Ramon Vargas, Samuel Ramey and Nathan Gunn.

Richard Bado will conduct the Russian National Opera and Renée Fleming tonight at 7:30 p.m. at Festival of the Arts BOCA, at the Mizner Park Amphitheater. For ticket availability, call 1-866-571-2787.