

# Varèse Sarabande Makes Holiday Magic With the Golden State Pops

BY LINDA A. RAPKA

Varèse Sarabande Records closed out its yearlong 35th anniversary celebration with the Golden State Pops Orchestra with a heartwarming holiday concert at the Warner Grand Theatre Dec. 21.

In honor of three and a half decades of releasing film music, Varèse Sarabande hosted a series of four concerts with GSPO during the orchestra's 2012/2013 season. Produced and hosted by the label's executive producer, Robert Townson, the December concert featured memorable scores from Hollywood's holiday classics to seasonal film favorites.

The program began with a world premiere concert adaptation of "A Christmas Carol," which originally aired on CBS in 1954 with score by Bernard Herrmann and lyrics by Maxwell Anderson. Townson narrated the fully costumed stage play, which featured Maestro Steven Allen Fox leading the Golden State Pops Orchestra and Maestra Marya Basaraba leading the GSPO Chorale.

Award-winning film composer John Debney served as guest conductor during the second half of the evening, performing music from his holiday film score "Elf" as well as songs from John Williams' "Home Alone 2" score. The orchestra also performed music from Vince Guaraldi's beloved "A Charlie Brown Christmas" prepared by composer and orchestrator William Ross, which featured incredible solos by world-renowned flutist Sara Andon, who was dressed like a winter princess in a stunning blue gown.

For over three decades, Varèse Sarabande Records has been home to more of film music's greatest composers than any other label. Founded in the spring of 1978, it became the first label solely dedicated to film music, releasing dozens of new film scores each year, along with countless classics from Hollywood's glorious Golden Age. Many of the label's first recordings



Photos by Linda A. Rapka

*Varèse Sarabande executive producer Robert Townson on stage with Maestro Steven Allen Fox, the orchestra, the evening's featured performer vocalists, and flute soloist Sara Andon.*



*Maestro Steven Allen Fox thanked Townson and presented an honorary plaque congratulating Varèse Sarabande for 35 years of releasing film music.*

were produced by the great George Korngold and conducted by the legendary likes of Miklós Rózsa and Elmer Bernstein. Over the years, the Varèse film music family grew to include virtually everyone you could think of, but with over 80 releases, no composer's music appeared more frequently on the label than Jerry Goldsmith's. Now with a catalog of over 1500 soundtrack albums, which grows by 60 to 70 titles each year,



*Upon leaving the venue, surprised guests were met with an anomaly in Los Angeles—holiday "snow" (Though really just soap and bubbles, the "snow" was a classy touch.)*

Varèse Sarabande remains the most prolific film music label in the world.

On May 11, 2013, the Golden State Pops Orchestra staged the first of its concert series in celebration of Varèse Sarabande's 35th Anniversary. The four concerts hosted a gathering of the label's roster of composers, along with other dignitaries from the film music world of Los Angeles.