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[September 21, 2014](#)

IVCI Romantic/Post-Romantic finals - day two

By [Tom Aldridge](#)



Though I know at this writing who the six laureates are and how they'll be awarded at the Scottish Rite Cathedral Auditorium Sunday afternoon, my view of the three Saturday concerto performances was arrived at prior to the jurors.' As was the case on Friday, each finalist was joined by the ISO under the direction of Joel Smirnoff -- at the Circle Theatre.

Saturday's concert gave us a parade of concerto chestnuts with which to discern playing excellence: first Ji Young Lim playing the Brahms Violin Concerto in D, Op. 77; then Yoo Jin Jang and the Tchaikovsky Violin Concerto in D, Op. 35; and finally the Sibelius Violin Concerto in D Minor, Op. 47 as played by Dami Kim.

Unequivocally the best playing by far that evening was by Yoo Jin Jang performing the Tchaikovsky. Her tonal control was near perfect throughout the three movements--unlike Ji Yoon Lee's on Friday of the same work. Jang possessed none of the defects of bowing, and her staccato work in the third movement was spectacular, and without a single slip. On any held note Jang eased into her [characteristic vibrato](#), making her reading of this work strongly reminiscent of Hilary Hahn's CD recording (and nobody does it better than Hilary). I thought it was the best playing in the competition.

Lim's reading of the Brahms' Concerto (heard first), though technically secure and musically convincing, displayed more tonal difficulties consistent with most of the IVCI participants: An uneven vibrato, occasional wobbliness, an intonation problem in the Joachim cadenza she used in the first movement. We were, however, salvaged by the lovely oboe solo ISO's principal Jennifer Christian gave us opening the slow movement. Lim seemed to control her tonal delivery better in the third movement. As for a perfect vibrato, she was capable; she just often failed to deliver it.

Dami Kim started her Sibelius Concerto beautifully--right on the mark, but began to wobble with excess when switching to her lower note registers. At the 2nd movement she started a little wide, while in the finale her tone was variable, going from white to wobbly.

At some point, it might be of great interest to the IVCI cognoscenti as to the criteria a given juror uses on which he/she bases his/her judgment of a given participant and the resultant assigning of a rating number from 1 to 25 -- perhaps better done in a non-competition year when we're not so swept up in the event.

Sept 20; Hilbert Circle Theatre