

IVCI semi-finals - day three

By Tom Aldridge

September 15, 2014

Another day, another winner. 23-year-old Yoo Jin Jang not only played the best of Sunday's four IVCI participants, but she gave us the best account so far of the required piece written for the competition, Ellen Taaffe Zwilich's Fantasy for Violin Solo. Since the composer gave the players the liberty to "give us" the piece as they see it, how do I know this? Because Jang played it the most beautifully of anyone preceding her. The sustained tones, the passage work, the trills, the double stops in fourths--they were all rendered in dulcet tones with a flowing momentum. Its brief, Gershwin-esque allusion was there but was not highlighted; it flowed past as part of the whole.

Unlike Saturday's Stephen Waarts, who did as well with his Bartók Solo Sonata, Jang maintained her playing level throughout her four-piece recital, including Myths, Op. 30, by Karl Szymanowski; Beethoven's lovely last sonata, No. 10 in G, Op. 96; and the early, four-movement Sonata by John Corigliano. I would rate her so far with Tessa Lark as the two best fiddlers of the Ninth Quadrennial. Perhaps I'll change my mind after hearing Monday's last semi-finals recital.

Ji-Young Lim, also from S. Korea, delivered outstanding technique and well honed dynamic control in Beethoven's Sonata No. 3 in E-flat Major, Op. 12 No. 3; Zwilich's Fantasy; Brahms' impassioned Sonata No. 3 in D Minor, Op. 108; and the Introduction and Rondo Capriccioso, Op. 28, by Saint-Saëns. But her tone was incessantly wobbly--her sustained-note pitch variation going at least a half-step either way. By any other name that is too-wide a vibrato, giving one the sensation of her being off-pitch along with being on-pitch.

The two remaining players, Kristi Gjezi, 24, France, and Bomsori Kim, 24, also of S Korea played their pieces with less tonal consistency than the first two, which means that at times they made an attractive sound; at other times they didn't. I should note that all four participants--even all 12 heard so far--are good enough to make a career out of solo concertizing or chamber playing. But, as I stated earlier, we must have a winner, and the choice anyone makes should come from who does best in the most difficult-to-achieve criterion. More on this later.

Sept. 14; Indiana History Center