

IVCI Laureate Chamber series features Ji Young Lim 2014 bronze medalist plays in season finale

By Tom Aldridge



Ji Young Lim



Chih-Yi Chen

Any chamber recital featuring the music of Schubert, Grieg and Brahms is bound to win over its audience. And with violinist Ji Young Lim and pianist Chih-Yi Chen to close out this season's International Violin Competition of Indianapolis' (IVCI's) Laureate Chamber Series, that composer choice was gladsome indeed. Jenő Hubay's Carmen Fantasie Brillante for Violin and Piano, Op. 3 No. 3, capped Schubert's late written Rondo for Violin and Piano in B Minor, D. 895; Grieg's Violin Sonata in C Minor, Op. 45 and Brahms' Violin Sonata No. 3 in D minor, Op. 108.

Our recitalists gave a sturdy account of the rondo, filled with late Schubert idioms, with a headlong rush to its conclusion. Chen's pianism sparkled with lovely phrasing and faultless passage and chord work. Lim's fiddle work was almost right on target throughout, with an occasionally wobbly vibrato producing an indistinct pitch. These tonal characteristics remained with her throughout the recital, obviating the need for me to repeat them. Otherwise her phrasing and passage work were easily at "laureate" level.

Grieg's C Minor Sonata was the last of three he wrote for violin-piano combination, and most music people consider it the best. In hearing it, one cannot help being reminded of the composer's masterpiece, the Piano Concerto in A Minor. Our two recitalists provided energetic readings where called for and lyric repose as a contrast. They played another headlong rush to its conclusion.

Brahms' impassioned D Minor sonata was also the last--and best--of the three he wrote, a four movement work with the third movement, a scherzo, noted for its brevity. And guess what: We had yet another headlong rush to its conclusion.

Many late-19th-century composers were sufficiently captivated by Bizet's opera Carmen to paraphrase its many themes for violin and piano (or orchestra if one were available). The two most popular of these were by Pablo de Sarasate and American film composer Franz Waxman--often appearing in the recital portion of the IVCI. Hubay's (1858-1937) Carmen Fantasie, though lesser known, is nonetheless engaging enough, with excerpts including the Carmen "Fate" motive, the "Habañera," the Toreador's song and "March." With the latter excerpt we had another headlong rush to its--well--you know what. *May 10; Indiana History Center*