

Review: Laureate/Ronen chamber series

IVCI presents laureate Haoming Xie, assisted by Ronen's David Bellman

By Tom Aldridge



Haoming Xie

In yet another confluence of chamber series, Tuesday's concert paired the IVCI Laureate Series with the [Ronen Chamber](#) series--in the person of clarinetist David Bellman. His wife and Ronen co-founder Ingrid Fischer-Bellman continues to recover from a shoulder problem; hopefully she can return for subsequent Ronen concerts.

Dominating this homage mainly to early Romanticism, IVCI 2010 fourth-place laureate Haoming Xie was joined by pianist Hyun Soo Kim. Xie played in all five program offerings while Kim had no piano part in the final work, Louis Spohr's infamous Nonet in F, Op. 31.

What sets the Nonet apart beyond calling for nine instruments rather than the usual eight (octet) is that there are no two instruments alike. We have a composition using one each violin, viola, cello, double bass, oboe, flute, horn, bassoon and Bellman's clarinet. A multiple use of any instrument creates a "choir" effect when you hear most chamber works of four or more instruments (starting with the string quartet and excepting the piano quartet). Hearing Spohr's Nonet exposes one to a panoply of single shaded colors. The composer's light-veined four movements provides a "colorful" experience from the top register of the flute to the bottom growling of the bass. All nine players showed a precise, balanced reading.

Our violin/piano duo began the program with Tchaikovsky's Valse-Scherzo, Op. 34, a light, tripping work with the composer's melodic talent on full display. Xie's instrument came across as rather dominating Kim's piano, though Xie's tonal attributes were well controlled--evenly centered vibrato. It was as though he couldn't avoid playing loud--almost blaring in spots.

Khachaturian's Trio in G Minor for Clarinet, Violin and Piano got a better balance--this time between Bellman's clarinet and Xie's violin. Wistful and somewhat jazzy, the Trio overall received a good reading.

Next came the perhaps most famous Chausson work, the Poème for violin and piano, Op. 25 (1893). This single-movement opus, filled with lyric reverie, got a better balance between the two instruments. The violin line was well controlled and evenly centered--no blaring here. Kim, whose pianism has been solid throughout the concert acquitted himself especially well here.

Our duo returned for Wieniawski's Polonaise de Concert in D, Op. 4, with no greater contrast possible with that of the Chausson. The lively piece recalls some of Chopin's polonaises, without quite achieving their musical values. Both artists rolled back the rug as they ushered intermission time. *April 5; Indiana History Center*