

ENCORE Chamber Music at CIM's Mixon Hall (July 14)

by Robert Rollin



Franz Schubert stole the show in ENCORE Chamber Music's Friday evening, July 14 Mixon Hall concert. Two of the composer's works showcased the talents of violist Dimitri Murrath (left), playing with two other talented Festival faculty.

The program's highlight was a transcription of Schubert's *Erlkönig* presented by violinist Jinjoo Cho and Murrath. The performance was stunning. Cho began the pulsating, triplet accompaniment at top speed and Murrath answered with the melody.

Ensemble was flawless throughout — an amazing feat, given the swift onrushing tempo. When Cho switched roles and assumed the melody, she matched Murrath's powerful timbre. Her focused intensity was riveting. Her change in tone color during the passages when the evil *Erlkönig* coaxes the child into his arms brought the events of the ballad to life, even without a vocal part.

Pianist Hyun Soo Kim joined Murrath for Schubert's *Arpeggione Sonata in a, D. 821*. Murrath's gorgeous sound balanced well with Kim's sensitive accompaniment. In the *Allegro moderato*, a beautiful wistful melody supported by engaging harmonies led to a second theme decorated with gentle 16th-note gusts, and a *marcato* climax. Murrath displayed remarkable bow control in the soft, fast passages. His lovely vibrato during the *Adagio's* introverted, hymn-like melody was captivating, and the expressive closing cadenza led without pause to the concluding *Allegretto*.

Nancy Zou joined Cho and Kim for Moritz Moszkowski's *Suite for Two Violins and Piano in g, Op. 71*. Both violinists carefully matched one another's warm tone-color, and Kim provided a delicate balance. In the opening *Allegro energico*, the lively second

theme sparkled. After Cho's lovely, low-register, cadenza-like solo, the two violinists rejoined in a stunning accelerando ending.

The second-movement waltz features forte echo effects among the three players, only to close with graceful pizzicatos and soft, staccato piano chords. The Lento assai continues the echo effects, but now in a captivating pianississimo dialogue ending with a scintillating, high passage in the violins. In the Finale, after the first theme returned, some dense, double-stops soon accelerated to a bravura closing in a tour de force of violin technique.

Faculty cellists Amit Even-Tov, Stella Ye, and Mindy Park joined with student Fellow James Hettinga in four movements from Modest Mussorgsky's *Pictures at an Exhibition*. Though it received a fine performance, the cello quartet transcription relies too heavily on mid-register ranges, and the moving lines sometimes sounded cluttered as a result. The closing *Great Gate of Kiev* was the best of the four. The encore of Debussy's *Claire de lune* was far more effective, with Even-Tov's exquisite, high-range solo and Ye's ascending arpeggios producing stunning beauty.

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