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Performance arts reviews

Ronen Chamber Ensemble

by [TOM ALDRIDGE](#) Sep 23, 2008

Four stars

IVCI Laureate Series; Indiana History Center; Sept. 16

Another season launching — this one for two series joined: the International Violin Competition of Indianapolis Laureate Series and the Ronen Chamber Series. Bella Hristova of Bulgaria, sixth-place laureate of the 2006 competition, played in all four selections last Tuesday. Chamber music's favorite program-launcher composer — Franz Joseph Haydn — saw (or did not see) his Divertimento in G for Flute, Violin and Cello start this one, featuring flutist Leela Breithaupt, violinist Hristova and cellist Ingrid Fischer Bellman. Excellent polish and fleet execution dominated this sparking Classical-era work. A very short, wistful Charles Ives piece, Largo for Violin, Clarinet and Piano, came next, with David Bellman's clarinet held in abeyance till near the end, but worth the wait. Then we had Stravinsky's scaled-down version of his Divertimento from his ballet music to *The Fairy's Kiss*, scored here for violin and piano. Hristova was joined by pianist Chih-Yi Chen in another sparking rendition of music paying strong homage to Tchaikovsky. In the second half, we heard Dvorak's String Quintet in G, Op. 77. Scored for string quartet plus doublebass, the latter instrument was played by L. Bennett Cranford — along with second violinist Louise Alexander and violist Nancy Agres. With Hristova tending to overshadow her partners, the quintet still showed tightly knit ensemble work. Throughout the program, Hristova fully lived up to her laureate status.