

International Chamber Soloists

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Group takes classical music to new heights

By BOB SAAR for The Hawk Eye

Burlington's Civic Music opened last night with a quiet tribute to longtime board member Bobby Wilson, then sat back for a stunning performance Wilson would have loved.

When the International Chamber Soloists walked onstage, a wave of applause washed the room, and it was as much for Bobby as the group.

By the end of the evening, the musicians had everyone's heart and soul.

International Chamber Soloists is a group of extraordinary young string players from around the world: musicians from Russia, Bulgaria, Latvia, Korea, Taiwan, New Zealand, Australia, Venezuela, Brazil and the U.S., led by music director and magical violinist Dmitri Berlinsky.

Berlinsky moved to New York from Russia as a winner of important international competitions and has been performing as soloist with major orchestras in the U.S., Europe, Latin America, Asia and Australia. Over those years he dreamed of establishing a chamber orchestra where his colleague-friends could find inspiration and the joy of playing together.

Berlinsky accomplished that to the highest degree with ICS, and their performance Tuesday night was clearly

one of the best classical concerts given at Memorial Auditorium in recent memory.

All musicians - bass, two cellos, two violas and seven violins - were splendid, but three continually caught the evening's ear.

Bassist Robert Johnson delivered a perfectly round, tangible foundation with a superb instrument that simply glowed with mellow, deep and perfectly defined clarity.

Cellist Ben Capps embraced his instrument like he'd taken it for his bride.

Then there was Berlinsky himself, a magician, a sorcerer on the violin, seducing the compositions with powerful delicacy, giving the audience a display of mastery that may never appear here again.

At times the musicians, all clad in black, thronged like a flock of playful vampires. They swarmed about each composition, hovering and diving upon it with such fierce energy it seemed they would suddenly take flight and disappear into the night.

Fortunately, they stayed the course, beginning with a frenetic and highly interpretive rendition of Piazzolla's "Four Seasons of Buenos Aires."



Artist Management

The second half featured Berlinsky as conductor, and this, too, was good for the concert-going soul. Berlinsky swooped and fluttered, then burst into fits of exaggerated arm movements, looking like he was harvesting the notes into his very soul.

But after a night of Tchaikovsky and other solidly classical composers, it was the encore of Leroy Andersen's "Fiddle-Fiddle," which captured the crowd's heart completely.

It was definitely not starched-collar, blue-blooded fare, and when the two violas did a jump-and-spin followed by the band singing a "da-da-da" melody, the crowd returned the effort with a terrific round of applause.

http://www.thehawkeye.com/story/Civic_Music_review_111611