
Kapell Finalists' Choice Music

Three of the 40 pianists competing at the University of Maryland's International Piano Festival and William Kapell Competition appeared as finalists Thursday night in the solo recital phase of the week-long event. In works chosen by the contestants (rather than the judges), Hie-Yon Choi, 24, of Korea, Anthony Hewitt, 21, of Great Britain, and Daniel Shapiro, 29, of the United States each gave a fairly extensive sample of their respective musical personalities and skills.

Shapiro's brave selection of works from Schoenberg's Op. 11 set and Schubert's sprawling Sonata in A Major, D. 959, was revealing, and his seasoned approach to the music showed a definite maturity. His sense of the sonata's grand and complex architecture paired with fine pacing and a polished

tone, made for a well-crafted performance throughout. He brought a real expressivity to the Schoenberg.

A brisk reading of Beethoven's B-flat Sonata, Op. 22, and Ravel's "Gaspard de la Nuit" showed Choi capable of flexible, supple playing. She had lovely rich tone, with some beautiful shading.

Hewitt's dreamy Beethoven Sonata in E, Op. 109, was a bit undisciplined, as if the young artist weren't quite sure of what to say with the varied moods of the piece. Scriabin's Sonata No. 3 was somewhat more focused.

The final round will be held Saturday at the Kennedy Center Concert Hall, when each pianist will perform a concerto with the National Symphony Orchestra.

—Kate Rivers