

Pianist’s international tour makes way to campus

by KYLIE AKINS assistant news editor

Her mother was a dancer and her father was a prominent opera singer. International pianist Di Wu grew up in a household inspired by the arts. By age 4, she was taking piano lessons and at 14 performed with the Beijing Philharmonic. Since then, Wu’s musical career has only continued to develop at an accelerated pace as she gained experience. She was described as “a most mature and sensitive pianist” by the Wall Street Journal. Currently she is one of seven finalists in the esteemed Van Cliburn International Piano Competition. In spring of 2009 she received Juilliard’s William Petschek Piano Debut Recital Award to add to her already burgeoning collection.

Chinese-born Wu moved to the U.S. in 1999 to study at the Manhattan School of Music with Zenon Fishbein, and from 2000 to 2005 she studied at the Curtis Institute with Gary Graffman. She went on to earn a Masters of Music degree at The Juilliard School under Yoheved Kaplinsky and, in 2009, an Artist Diploma under Joseph Kalichstein and Robert McDonald.

Dr. Cliff Ganus, professor of music, said he saw Wu as a pianist who would soon become a common name in the classical music world.

“She has good credentials,” Ganus said. “Her career is at a point where it is expanding considerably. She’s done some great performances and, since we booked her, has done even more.”

Wu’s parents were both professors at Xiamen University at her hometown in China, and her education began early due to the convenient accessibility to piano teachers. She began to win competitions and went pro at 12.

“It was like background education,” Wu said. “I was able to sit down and practice for a long while. And I seemed to enjoy it, from what my parents said. They didn’t really have to force me.”

Wu said she is constantly sacrificing a personal life she has never known to pursue her passion. But she said per-

forming is her focus now, and the reward received from her hard work is worth it.

“When everything works just right, when you’re getting everything you want, your fingers are doing what you want and the piano is responding the way you want it, then it becomes magic,” Wu said. “There are times when you get on the piano, and you worry. From the first note to the last note, you worry. And that’s the worst time. But when you’re not worrying and even when you think you’re following a road map, you’re actually being inspired by the piano. That becomes magic.”

She said she plans to see her performing career through. As her musical talent begins to thrive in its prime, she is able to give advice to aspiring musicians.

“It takes a lot of work,” Wu said. “Just pure instinct is not enough. You need a lot of work, and you need to desire to really take things to the next level. That part is not talent. There’s a lot of thinking that goes into it. And luck. There is always luck involved.”

Wu’s performance was held in the Administration Auditorium, where she was received by a large audience from the campus and community on Monday, Jan. 25.

Her program began with pieces from Clara and Robert Schumann. Robert’s Davidsbundlertanze is an 18-part dance composition characterized by the musical “conversation” between the composer’s polar aspects of his personality. During the Eusebius pieces, Wu’s love for the music was emphasized in her tender movements throughout calm, romantic melodies. In the Florestan parts, the strong, energetic emotions of the music were displayed in her facial expressions and strong movements



Di Wu performs in the Administration Auditorium on Jan. 25.

across the keys. Wu recounted a time in which she first played this piece, when she commented on the piece to her teacher.

“I don’t think I could ever describe love better than this piece,” Wu said. “It says, ‘I will love you forever.’”

The piece ends with a triple bass note “C” to solidly dedicate the composition to his wife, Clara.

The next composer she chose for her program was Maurice Ravel, a French man who created the five-piece composition called Miroirs (Mirrors).

“I’m a huge Ravel fan,” Wu said. “He’s been my favorite composer of all time. His music to me is something I feel like I breathe, and there are so many colors and stories.”

The various pieces were all highly descriptive of beautiful moments in time, like the flutter of a moth in the night, a boat bobbing in the ocean or the early morning air cleared by the calm church bells.

The last piece she performed was a transcription from Gounod’s Faust. The composer, Franz Liszt, was an incredibly virtuosic pianist. He made the piece difficult with a lot of jumps, octaves and runs. The composition showed off her skill and precision and had a powerful, sweet and upbeat ending.

“I love opera, and I love transcriptions,” Wu said. “It’s a very fun piece and a great way to end a concert. Lots of fireworks.”

The precision with which she played was unimpeded by the speed necessary for the difficult pieces she selected. Her intensity would often nearly pull her from her piano stool.

“I can’t imagine not doing it,” Wu said. “I’m just not made for a 9 to 5 job. I never lived that life. I don’t have the personality for it. It [a musical career] is something I want to see through. I really need to see it through. It’s my passion.”

Sudoku

			3	4	1		5	
				8				
4		3			5			8
6	8	9		5			1	
	4			7				
						9		
		8			6		3	
	7							1
1		5			4			

Answer to last issue’s crossword and Sudoku

F	R	A	N			P	O	L	O		B	E	L	T
O	I	L	E	R		A	V	I	V		E	P	E	E
R	O	M	E	O		M	A	D	E		L	O	V	E
E	T	A				P	E	E	L		R	A	I	S
						T	E	L	L		A	C	R	E
S	O	S	O			M	A	S	C	O	T		S	E
T	W	I	T				P	E	A	S	A	N	T	S
E	L	L	A			S	M	A	R	T		N	O	A
M	E	L	L	O	W	E	D					N	O	P
S	T	Y				P	A	R	E	N	T		U	T
						C	A	N	E		O	R	A	L
A	N	N	A	L	S		A	M	E	N		E	R	A
R	O	A	N			O	L	G	A		T	A	M	E
A	R	G	O			N	E	E	D		S	P	I	E
B	A	S	E			G	O	D	S			E	L	L

7	4	2	3	6	9	5	1	8
9	8	5	7	1	4	2	6	3
3	6	1	2	8	5	7	9	4
1	5	8	6	4	7	3	2	9
6	3	7	9	2	1	4	8	5
4	2	9	8	5	3	1	7	6
5	9	4	1	7	6	8	3	2
8	1	3	4	9	2	6	5	7
2	7	6	5	3	8	9	4	1

Answer to last issue’s cryptogram

At Christmas I no more desire a rose,
Than wish a snow in May’s new-fangled shows;
But like of each thing that in season grows.

The Bison Crossword

Across

- 1 Adder
- 4 At what time
- 8 Crow noise
- 11 Hawaiian dish
- 12 Grade
- 13 Higher up
- 16 Courtliness
- 18 Danger
- 19 Just about
- 20 War and Peace author
- 22 Acclamation
- 25 Alder tree
- 26 Record
- 27 Where over-spending will land you
- 30 Twister actress Hunt
- 31 Opaque gem
- 32 Title of respect
- 33 Secreted
- 34 Japanese coin
- 35 Jackals
- 37 Note taker
- 40 Sunburned
- 41 Paycheck (Abbr.)
- 42 Talipot palm leaf
- 43 Daisylike flower
- 46 Word study
- 48 Utter discomfort
- 49 Existed
- 50 Greedy king
- 51 Quest
- 53 Biscuit
- 55 Aim at
- 56 Photo covering
- 60 Unemotional
- 61 Aspect
- 62 Deuce
- 63 Greatest degree
- 64 Let it stand!

1	2	3		4	5	6	7		8	9	10			
11				12					13			14	15	
16				17					18					
				19				20						21
22	23	24					25				26			
27					28	29				30				
31					32				33					
34				35				36				37	38	39
				40				41			42			
43	44	45				46				47				
48					49					50				
51				52				53	54					
	55						56				57	58	59	
	60						61				62			
				63			64				65			

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65 Congeal

Down

- 1 Emulator
- 2 Sun god
- 3 Pastry
- 4 Phantom
- 5 Suspend
- 6 Engrave
- 7 Maiden name
- 8 Chicken
- 9 Eve’s son
- 10 Twisted woolen yarn
- 14 Critical
- 15 Split to unite

- 17 Twist
- 20 Three (It.)
- 21 Hankering
- 22 Aeneid
- 23 Make do
- 24 Borrowed money
- 25 Helps out
- 28 Persian Gulf peninsula
- 29 Vase
- 30 Not hers
- 33 Steering system
- 35 Convertible
- 36 Vote type
- 37 Trudge
- 38 Seaweed
- 39 Time periods

- 40 Stress
- 42 Medlies
- 43 Unit of elec. current
- 44 Entree forerunners
- 45 Fortune teller’s aid
- 46 Consume
- 47 Egg dish
- 49 Crone
- 52 Building block
- 53 Leave out
- 54 Impolite
- 56 Sharp curve
- 57 Common contraction
- 58 Be obliged
- 59 Negation

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