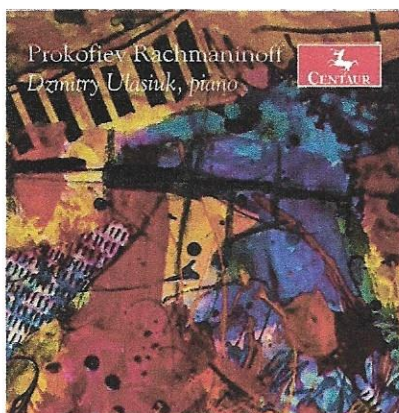


PROKOFIEV 10 Pieces from *Romeo and Juliet*, op. 75: Folk Dance; Scene: The Street Awakens; Minuet; Young Juliet; Masks; Montagues and Capulets; Friar Lawrence; Mercutio; Dance of the Girls with Lilies; Romeo and Juliet before Parting. **RACHMANINOFF** *Études-Tableaux*, op. 33 • Dzmitry Ulasiuk (pn) • CENTAUR 3698 (62:12)



Prokofiev: 10 Pieces from *Romeo & Juliet*, Op. 75; Rachmaninoff: *Etudes-Tableaux*, Op. 33
AUDIO CD
Centaur Records



The young pianist Dzmitry Ulasiuk is something of a find for Centaur. He gives strong, characterful, and well-attuned performances of these difficult pieces, adjusting his mode of delivery from composer to composer. His Prokofiev is full of nervous energy, with the characteristic staccatos deliciously done. There is certainly no shortage of technique here (listen to “Young Juliet” or “Mercutio”) but there is also much character (the “Menuet”). Ulasiuk is also perfectly capable of making a huge quasi-orchestral sound without breaking the tone of his piano (“Montagues and Capulets”—and what a great contrasting central section, full of potential energy). The magnificent legato in the slowly unfolding “Friar Lawrence” is most impressive, as is the way Prokofiev’s inner parts seem to curl themselves around in snake-like fashion. The recording supports all this, with a nice “ping” to the higher registers but a richness in the bass; the upper-voice sweetness that opens the final movement, “Romeo and Juliet before parting,” is particularly beautiful. We immediately enter a different space for the Rachmaninoff, the op. 33 *Études-Tableaux*, and Ulasiuk changes his stance accordingly: fluent now, with the music having an identifiably more flowing, lyrical bent. The C-Major, op. 33/2, with its similarities to the G \sharp -Minor Prelude, op. 32/12, is winningly done, while in the

very next *Étude-Tableau* Ulasiuk terraces the music superbly, inviting one to wonder about the quality of his Debussy playing. The sense of unhurried self-examination in the *Grave C-Minor* is fascinating; it is as if Rachmaninoff is meditating on the nature of existence itself, and as consonances encroach into the stream of consciousness, we find our rays of hope. Throughout, Ulasiuk's awareness of harmony and register is remarkable: The opening of the *E b -Major* is like coming out into sunlight. It is impossible not to be swept away with the power of the final *C#-Minor*, too.

There is obviously competition here, in the form of Ayako Uehara and Lugansky for the Prokofiev and Ashkenazy and Xeyin Wang for the Rachmaninoff. But Ulasiuk has a strong voice of his own, and this is an excellent coupling for a disc. We will be hearing more of this young man, for sure. **Colin Clarke**

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