

The Dallas Morning News

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SNAPSHOT REVIEWS



Russian Recital

Wu (ArtistLed)

ON HER OWN: Pianist Wu Han was in Dallas on Monday, performing with her husband, cellist David Finckel, in a Dallas Chamber Music recital. (The two of them are co-artistic directors of New York's Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center and co-founders of the ArtistLed CD label; Mr. Finckel is also the cellist of the Emerson String Quartet.) Here Ms. Wu is on her own in a most attractive sampler of music by three of Russia's greatest composers of the late 19th and early 20th centuries.

ATTRACTIVE SEQUENCE:

Tchaikovsky's *The Seasons*, a cycle of 12 movements portraying the months of the year, represents salon music. It's charming, if not what you could call profound. Ms. Wu goes on to offer an appealing variety, from stormy to dreamy, of seven Rachmaninoff preludes, drawn from both the Op. 23 and Op. 32 collections. Rachmaninoff's sassy arrangement of Fritz Kreisler's *Liebesfreud* supplies smiles before the otherworldly ruminations of Scriabin's Fourth Sonata.

FINE PLAYING: The playing is fine throughout, technically impeccable and naturally expressive. One can just imagine a bit more magic, more unpredictability, in the repeated gestures of the Tchaikovsky vignettes. The piano sound is certainly clear, with a nice halo of resonance, but close proximity of the microphones lends a little too much "ping."

BOTTOM LINE: An appealing sampler of Russian piano music, sympathetically played. (This CD apparently is available only through the ArtistLed.com Web site.)

Scott Cantrell