

## Rachmaninov - Suites Nos. 1 & 2 & Symphonic Dances (1995)



Suite No. 1 For Two Pianos, Op. 5 ("Fantaisie-tableaux") (23:00) 1-1 1. *Barcarolle: Allegretto* 7:42 1-2 2. *La Nuit ... L'Amour: Adagio Sostenuto* 6:26 1-3 3. *Les Larmes: Largo Di Molto* 6:19 1-4 4. *Pâques: Allegro Maestoso* 2:33

Suite No. 2 For Two Pianos, Op. 17 (22:59)  
1-5 1. *Introduction: Alla Marcia* 4:19 1-6 2. *Valse: Presto* 5:55 1-7 3. *Romance: Andantino* 6:55 1-8 4. *Tarantelle: Presto* 5:50

Études-Tableaux, Op. 33 (22:57)  
1-9 No. 1 *In F Minor - Allegro Non Troppo* 2:52 1-10 No. 2 *In C Major - Allegro* 2:41 1-11 No. 3 *In C Minor - Grave* 4:43 1-12 No. 5 *In D Minor - Moderato* 2:45 1-13 No. 6 *In E Flat Minor - Non Allegro; Presto* 1:41 1-14 No. 7 *In E Flat Major - Allegro Con Fuoco* 1:45 1-15 No. 8 *In G Minor - Moderato* 3:46 1-16 No. 9 *In C Sharp Minor - Grave* 2:44

Symphonic Dances, Op. 45 (For Two Pianos) (34:25)  
2-1 1. *Non Allegro* 11:35 2-2 2. *Andante Con Moto (Tempo Di Valse)* 9:22 2-3 3. *Lento Assai; Allegro Vivace* 13:28 2-4 *Russian Rhapsody For Two Pianos In E Minor* 9:11 2-5 *Variations On A Theme Of Corelli, Op. 42* 20:14  
André Previn - Piano (tracks: 1-01 to 1-08, 2-1 to 2-4) Vladimir Ashkenazy - Piano (all tracks)

All three pieces on this exceptionally well-executed and recorded disc are among the most remarkable works ever composed for two pianos. The First Suite is a comparatively early opus, replete with Rimskyian orientalisms and the fiery, gypsyesque passion that would dominate Rachmaninov's music until the First Symphony debacle. Rachmaninov re-emerged at the turn of the last century a more integrated creative personality, displaying a supreme gift for long-breathed melody, most notably via the Second Piano Concerto. The Symphonic Dances date from the other end of his life, by which time he was principally celebrated as the last and arguably greatest pianist of the Golden Age. This glorious music is not only extremely difficult to play, it also creates all manner of problems regarding coordination. No matter how note-splattered the pages become, they somehow maintain precise unanimity of ensemble, while ensuring that Rachmaninov's little textural asides are plainly audible. The only thing I miss is a feeling of exultation, of those miraculous lyrical phrases emerging with skin-rippling

intensity. For that, despite the occasional tuning miss-match, Ashkenazy and Previn (Decca) reign supreme. ---Julian Haylock, classical-music.com

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