



CLASSICAL
GRAND RUSSIAN
Albert Tiu, Piano
Centaur 3661
★★★★★

In his latest recording, Singapore-based Filipino pianist Albert Tiu eschews the miniatures of past albums and goes for the big picture.

This appears to be a first recording coupling the two mammoth piano sonatas of the Russian composers Pyotr Tchaikovsky and Sergei Rachmaninov.

Tchaikovsky's Grand Sonata In G Major and Rachmaninov's First Sonata In D Minor play for more than 30 minutes each and serve as preparatory works for two massive concertos – Tchaikovsky's Second and Rachmaninov's Third, also in the same keys – to come.

Their sprawling opening move-

ments run the risk of being stodgy and protracted, but Tiu paces each very well, building up arch-like to thrilling climaxes.

The further contrasts provided in the subsequent slow movements and a mercurial Scherzo in the Tchaikovsky are brought out with idiomatic feeling and unfailing imagination.

Tiu is a born romantic at heart and the Faustian inspiration to the three movements of the Rachmaninov is unlikely to be missed.

Adding to the excellent recorded sound are interesting personal anecdotes and programme notes by the pianist himself and aptly humorous artwork.

This is a proud production of Singapore's Yong Siew Toh Conservatory of Music that can stand up to scrutiny with the best recordings of the classical catalogue.

Chang Tou Liang