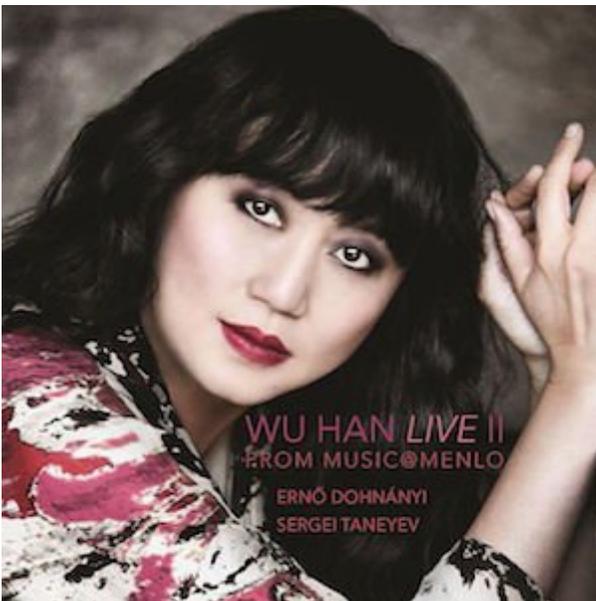




Wu Han Live II. Ernő Dohnányi, Piano Quintet No. 1. Sergei Taneyev. Piano Quintet in C minor. Wu Han, piano. Music@Menlo LIVE / ArtistLed

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Unless you live in or around New York City where she and her husband, cellist David Finckel, administer and perform for the Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center, buy the annual set of releases from Music@Menlo, or are fortunate enough to live near one of the college towns where she performs on tour as a duo with her husband each year, you probably don't know that Wu Han is one our finest pianists. Her work with Finckel is right at the top, their set of the Beethoven *Cello Sonatas* among the very best ever.

Wu Han's and Finckel's (and recording engineer and violinist Da-Hong Seetoo's) proprietary record label, Artistled, has now released two CD's in conjunction with Music@Menlo featuring Wu Han, presumably to broaden her audience. Her first album was a solo program focussing on Tchaikovsky's *Seasons* and a series of Rachmaninoff's *Preludes*. This new one draws two of

her performances from Music@Menlo programs (2014, 2016) with such notables as violist Paul Neubauer, violinist Arnaud Sussmann, and cellist Finckel.

Both of these works are from the late romantic repertoire, rich with nineteenth century flavor. If you did not know who is playing the piano here, you would likely conclude that the performer, while clearly the central voice holding everything together with firm and graceful tact, is not a virtuoso. And you would be correct. The only way you could truly appreciate her contribution would be be if some less attentive, less proficient, and less intuitively tuned in performer took her place at which point, I guarantee you, the music would fall apart. Her excellence is especially evident in the Taneyev quintet.

If this music is your preferred fare, you should enjoy this release immensely, not least for the usual extraordinary good sound engineered by Da-Hong Seetoo.