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CD review

By Bradley Winterton / Contributing reporter



It's hard to overpraise the Taiwan Philharmonic/ NSO here. Everything is stupendous, and the performance — recorded live over two evenings — achieves the almost impossible in equaling Strauss's staggering, almost unbelievable inspiration. I will never need another version now that I've got this one.

The recorded sound is diamond-sharp, and the feeling manages to alternate between the sumptuous

and the skittish, with the simply awe-inspiring thrown in for good measure. You can almost tell by listening to any five minutes of the music how simply happy the orchestra is. People know when they're doing something supremely well, and these men and woman certainly know it here.

Strauss seems to be especially suited to Lu's temperament, and he could scarcely find a more exalted mentor (the 20th century's greatest composer for my money). This work has sometimes been mocked for its ostensible subject-matter, the composer's home life, but only by the ignorant. It's one of the greatest orchestral constructions that has ever been achieved, with its emotion just as big as its extraordinary ingenuity.

If you want to hear what 100 and more instrumentalists can do when a genius sets them to work, you can hardly do better than listen to the Sinfonia Domestica, and as performances go it would be very hard indeed to beat this one.

■ The CD is available on the Net: goods.ruten.com.tw/item/show?21546076663444

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