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Schubert Piano Sonatas – No 14 in A minor D784; No 13 in A major D664 **Szymanowski** Piano Sonata No 2 in A major Op 21
Lucas Debargue (piano)
 Sony Classical 88985465632, 68 mins



Lucas Debargue has already carved a firm footing among notable pianists today with his previous Sony releases: his disc of Scarlatti, Ravel, Chopin, Liszt and Grieg elicited five stars from *IP* in 2016. Here, the pianist seeks to dive deeper, exploring two lesser-known Schubert sonatas and treating them with infinite care, presenting them as the masterpieces they are. The unhurried first movement of D784 carries granitic grandeur; the brief central movement punches well above the weight its duration might imply. Debargue shades melodies exquisitely, while Schubert's terracing of registers is intelligently delivered. The scamperings of the finale quickly explode like fireworks, Debargue's touch reminding us of his excellence in Scarlatti.

We don't get 'music-box' Schubert in D664; anguish surfaces regularly. The link between the first and second movements is as smooth as it is profound; the gentle fragility of the finale hints at deeper things afoot. This is superb Schubert playing, up there with the likes of Uchida.

Inspired coupling, too, for the Szymanowski Sonata. Debargue's achievement is to project the work's crepuscular beauty while retaining textural clarity. He pinpoints the interior beauty of the second movement while never once losing the structural thread. The concluding Fuga oscillates between Scriabin-esque mysticism and Busonian intensity. The recording is brilliantly crisp, allowing Debargue's voice-leading to emerge unencumbered; yet the bass end is full and resonant. While Richter's live recording from 1982 (Doremi DHR8037) is as all-encompassing as one might imagine, this is a fine modern counterpart that cedes little to that great master.

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