



American Record Guide

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S**SCHUBERT:** *Piano Sonata in A, D 959;*
Arpeggione Sonata

David Finckel, vc; Wu Han, p
Artisted 10401—67 minutes

As a typecast cellist, I don't get to review piano sonatas as often as I would like. It is therefore a pleasure to hear one of Schubert's great late sonatas on a professional level, though the little *Arpeggione* Sonata is clearly the excuse for sending it to me. Thanks, Don! This is one of the three last sonatas, each of which breaks the bounds of the classical style in different ways. This one does it partly by ending the last movement as it began the first, partly by basing the last movement on a tune he had used in the slow movement of one of his earlier sonatas. Mainly, though, this work continues work Schubert had been doing earlier by building the development section on material quite different from anything evident in the exposition, showing us another world outside in true romantic style.

Han plays these quick changes of mood with a sense of both romance and humor, perfectly controlled technically while quietly emphasizing the kooky nature of Schubert's thought. The slow movement, with its gradually developing whirlwind of a middle section, is beautifully handled, with due attention to the fact that the whirlwind never quite goes away, hinted at in the return of the outer section. The quirky scherzo is handled with virtuosity and a finely honed dramatic sense, particularly in the trio, with its disturbing, jumpy bass notes. The finale is a large scaled rondo, much more dramatic than its earlier model, though perhaps less spontaneous. Han plays all of this with great polish and control.