



**Sergei Prokofiev & Pyotr Ilyich  
Tchaikovsky: Symphony No. 5 & Romeo  
and Juliet**

aud 92.557

EAN: 4022143925572



[Fanfare](#) (Peter J. Rabinowitz - 2007.03.01)

Here's a low-wattage performance of Prokofiev's second-most-popular symphony, played with confidence by an orchestra that sounds (no surprise) as if it knows the music well. On the whole, Sanderling's reading is slow—but it doesn't bring the kind of heart-stopping anguish found in the even slower Bernstein/Israel PO performance. Rather, the tempo choices here give the music a laid-back quality, allowing us to soak it up without a sense of pressure—a temperate effect compounded by the washed-out colors (the lack of tang to the woodwind sound, the plump, cushioned sound of the lower brass), by the slightly casual treatment of rhythm (there's not much snap, even in the second movement), and by the generally subdued climaxes (you won't be shattered by the coda of the first movement).

Those who see the key to this work in its more corrosive elements will find it too tame—as, perhaps, will those who seek a more concentrated vein of lyricism. Certainly, in their different ways, Koussevitzky, Bernstein, Rozhdestvensky, Järvi, and (surprisingly) Tennstedt—to name just a few of the best who have taken up this music over the past six decades—all offer a consistently higher level of tension. Those for whom the Fifth points the way to The Tale of the Stone Mountain, however, may well find Sanderling's moderation a welcome balm.

The middle-of-the-road Romeo is a bit less phlegmatic, but otherwise similar in outlook—you won't find much edge in the fight music or much erotic pull in the love music, but the work holds together well and builds steadily through the final pages. The sound—converted to DSD from 44.1kHz/24 bit PCM originals—has an impressive ambience and depth, especially if you give the volume a bit of a boost.