

CLASSICAL
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TCHAIKOVSKY

**Includes Nutcracker Suite; Capriccio
Italien; Symphony No. 4 in F minor.**

Op. 36

Duo Caron, pianos

ATMA Records (DDD) CD, ACD 2

2102

Performance: ★★★★★

Sound: ★★★★★

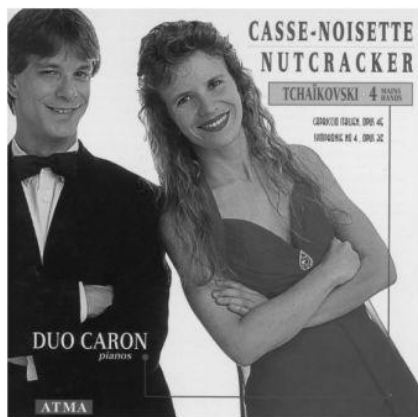
Orchestral transcriptions for piano duo may not be everybody's cup of tea — great recordings of the orchestral originals proliferate, so why invest in a piano transcription? Listening to these arrangements is like stepping back in time to late 19th-century Europe, when every amateur

The suite from Tchaikovsky's perennial *Nutcracker* is heard here in a four-hands transcription by Edward Langer, and none of the charm of this enchanting music is lost in this version. In fact, in places the extra tinkle and glitter of the piano help illuminate the score : this is a very successful performance.

The *Capriccio Italien* is offered in an original transcription by the composer and, as expected, succeeds beautifully. I was most leery, though, of the mammoth Fourth Symphony and how it would sound on instruments designed more for their attack than their sustaining powers. But in this case, Martin Caron's transcription, for two pianos four-hands, works brilliantly.

The pianists must be congratulated for their fine articulation throughout this entire disc. Things are always clear—never pounded out—and played with a lively, sparkling sound. Listeners who approach the album for what it is, as opposed to what it cannot be (a real symphony orchestra), will find it succeeds very well. I would recommend a listen.

— *Heléna Bowkun*



pianist would have dabbled in this music in arrangements, usually for piano four-hands. The brave and entrepreneurial duo Caron demonstrates that, when such arrangements are well played, they can be very effective.

