

<p>Rachmaninoff's Recital Proves Impressive.</p> <p>Sergei Rachmaninoff, the distinguished Russian composer-pianist, fully realized the high expectations which his recent appearance with the Thomas orchestra had awakened when he gave a recital of his own compositions yesterday afternoon in Orchestra hall. The audience was fairly large and had every reason to be demonstrative in its expressions of approval, for Rachmaninoff is one of the significant figures in the world of music today.</p> <p>The program escaped monotony by reason of its brevity. Rachmaninoff's creations are all imbued with that somber atmosphere which other of his countrymen have taught us to regard as typically Russian. Furthermore, they are couched in an idiom that is so markedly individual that only the strength and eloquence of his more important utterances permit them to escape the limitations that attach to a musical dialect. As it is this individual harmonic and figurative accent becomes one of the most potent charms of his music, and they are many. Thus the smaller numbers are saved from insignificance even when they are musically weak in content,</p>	<p>while the more important works rise to lofty heights.</p> <p>He began with his sonata, op. 23, which had on this occasion its first hearing in this city. Like his symphonic poem and his concerto, it must be counted among the important novelties of the season. Its claims to greatness are surely based upon rhythmical vitality and strength, upon melodic originality and eloquence and upon a technical mastery of the problems of composition that makes the sonata form an elastic, yet beautifully symmetrical, pattern, and that compasses a harmonic and figurative variety that marks a definite addition to the musical vocabulary of the present. It contains an appeal to the imagination that is not unlike that exerted by the modern French school. It shares with modern Germany, as represented by Brahms, that atmosphere of mystery which it teaches us can be evoked by other means than the harmonic unusualness of the present day Frenchmen. Not that Rachmaninoff follows the accepted harmonic speech of our forefathers without many an effective variation and accent. But he establishes his</p>	<p>atmosphere, where it is not inherent in the melodic idea, by means of his manifold figurative device, which not infrequently attains the significance of a new technic for the piano.</p> <p>The sonata was the one important composition presented yesterday. The remainder of the program was devoted to smaller compositions that at least served the purpose of acquainting us more fully with some of the more individual accents of his musical speech. Of these the humoresque, the barcarolle and the G minor prelude can be recommended to pianists as pieces that are not only very grateful, but are well worth the time and effort that must be spent in their mastery.</p> <p>Pianistically Rachmaninoff is a master. He indulges in no outward display of a merely virtuosic nature. But his control of tone values and contrasts, of pedal effects and of all technical complications that demand facility comprises one of the most important examples of the art of piano playing the season has witnessed.</p> <p>GLENN DILLARD GUNN.</p>
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