

# MUSIC LOVERS STIRRED BY RUSSIAN PIANIST

Rachmaninoff Wins Added  
Laurels, but Omits Many of  
Great Masters From Program

By REDFERN MASON.

Sergei Rachmaninoff gave a piano recital yesterday afternoon and, in the whole Columbia Theatre there was not a seat unoccupied. Parquet and boxes, balcony and gallery were filled, and probably a hundred people stood up.

The composer-pianist devised his program as if he were playing for some sentimental parlor in Vienna, and he was apparently justified in so doing, for the audience accorded him the laurels due to a conqueror. The tiered rows of young people who had come for accidental reasons to hear the Chopin numbers, were delighted. The master played the things they play at, and they shimmered with blissful admiration.

The admiration was justified. But folks who went to the theater in hopes that the greatest of the latter-day Russians would give them a message—a musical Colossus to them and send them home electrified by the vision of a new heaven and a new earth—were disappointed.

### PROGRAM RESTRICTED.

With the exception of the Funeral March Sonata of Chopin, the program did not include a single work which could give scope for the genius of a master pianist to manifest itself. There was no Bach; there was no Beethoven; there was no Brahms; Schubert and Schumann were unrepresented.

In their place we had the Petrarch "Sonnetto" of that heavenly charlatan, Franz Liszt, all machinating diaphanities, superbly played indeed, but provocative of a certain feeling of resentment because it filled the place which should have been held by, say, the "Hammerclavier" sonata of Beethoven or the "Chromatic Fantasia" of Bach.

Nakiesse oblige, Rachmaninoff is a man of genius, an aloof, self-indrawn Slav. But he allows the spirit of his race to lie dormant, and all the applause of the sentimentalists and the technique worshippers, with their futile lorgnettes, could hardly make amends for the grief of the discreet at the waste of high talent on a series of works which, relatively speaking, were trifles.

The opening work was N. Medtner's "Improvisation," an interesting composition, but hardly calculated to throw the listener into that mood of uplifted receptivity one experiences when the player is a Paderewski, a Cortot, or a Josef Hofmann.

### EXQUISITE SUBTLETY.

The beautiful "Ronde Brillante" of Weber had more of the authentic fire in it. It sparkled like flowers wet with dew in the morning sunlight. The gradations of tone were exquisite in their subtlety. It was music that laughed for sheer beauty.

Of the Chopin group the one number that touched notes of eer-likeness was the B flat minor Sonata. And yet, with the exception of the stern harmonies of initial part of the march, into which the pianist poured hues of "earthquake and eclipse," even that seemed rather the performance of a super-pedagogue than an inspired tone-poet.

And what enthusiasm can one generate over such boudoir music as the Moszkowski "Jongleur"? One has a right to expect something more from a master like Rachmaninoff than daintiness and sentimentality. It would be interesting to know what "those who know" among the musicians present thought of this tragic loss of a golden opportunity.

Rachmaninoff played two of his own compositions. They were the C sharp minor "Trelude" and a "Serenade." It was gratifying to get from the composer an authoritative reading of the "Trelude"; but the "Serenade" is album-leaf music and in no wise calculated to give the impression that the Russian is what we know him to be—a great composer.

### SECOND RECITAL DUE.

The end was the ray banality of the Schulz-Evler version of the "Blue Danube" waltz. I marveled where Rachmaninoff had got his idea of the taste of the San Francisco public. Can it be that his sojourn at Burlington had led him to confuse us with the denizens of Suburbia?

It was Frank Healy's idea that Rachmaninoff should give a second recital. He owes it to his self-respect to do so. His performance yesterday conveyed little more than the idea of a fine technician with moments of illumination. The termites could not make bricks without straw and the great master cannot reveal himself through an advertisement programme.

Where was the mysticism that is Holy Russia? There was no hint of it, and that Kriegerian encore only deepened the feeling of Viennese sentimentality that was disengaged by the Strauss.

It is to weep.