

PIANIST THRALLS CAPACITY CROWD

Rachmaninoff Proves Self Musical Genius Still

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Monday night Sergei Rachmaninoff, one of the true titans of contemporary music both as composer and interpreter, was at the public auditorium in the capacity of piano recitalist. Today more people than Portland's largest hall could accommodate without resorting to temporary wing seats are again assuring themselves that there is only one Rachmaninoff and that he is a great artist.

The capacity this Russian genius has for distilling the last essential drop of musical significance from any composition awarded a place on his program is seemingly limitless. There are, of course, certain composers who do not receive his artistic attention. But with those who do sharing an interpretive revelation such as no one else accords them, there is joy in those camps favoring the kind of program Mr. Rachmaninoff gives.

Program Proves Memorable

His program on Monday night was one to remember. It set forth by way of Rameau through a set of variations wherein the soloist transformed his somber concert grand piano into an ornately decorated, thin-voiced harpsichord of the 18th century. He moved then to J. S. Bach, not Bach the theoretician, but the warm-natured kapellmeister who was humane in his love of beauty and order.

The next section of his program was devoted to Beethoven, that seldom seen Beethoven who had a program in his head. This program was the E-major sonata, whose three movements are labeled respectively, "Les Adieux," "L'absence" and "Le Retour." It was written by the composer as the amiable gesture of a courtier to his patron and pupil, Archduke Rudolph, after the advance of the French upon Vienna made it unwise for the nobleman to remain in the city. Having more outward than inner compulsion, the music doesn't get into an inspired stride before the finale.

Logic, Emotion Unusual

But under Mr. Rachmaninoff's discerning eye the sonata showed more logic and emotional significance than one is wont to hear in it.

Schubert came under the visiting pianist's evocative care in an impromptu and a rondo. The latter, infectious in gaiety, ingenuous as a country dance, sounded like something the wine-loving Schubert might have dashed off extemporaneously during celebration of a "heuriger" of Vienna's new wine season.

Post-intermission numbers featured Rachmaninoff the composer, Chopin and Liszt.

A trifle more stooped, rather more tired in appearance, the great Rachmaninoff has lost none of his extraordinary technical grasp. And the fire of his interpretive genius still warms everyone within hearing.