

Vital Rachmaninoff Is Heard by Large, Worshipful Crowd

BY J. D. CALLAGHAN

If it were possible that the downpour of Monday night kept anyone away from the opening of the Masonic Auditorium series in Masonic Temple, it was not discernible within the walls of that august building, for the worshipful crowd which sat at the feet of Sergei Rachmaninoff overflowed into the pit and took up what little standing room there was available.

The audience heard a Rachmaninoff strangely and magnificently different from the Rachmaninoff of tradition. True, there was the same granite-hewn body and carven face—the same hands that seemed to possess a sentience of their own—but the results achieved by those same hands were somehow more vital, more impassioned than ever before.

Artist Breaks Traditions

Especially was this true of the Beethoven "Apassionata" sonata. It is quite likely that Rachmaninoff left few traditions unbroken in his playing of the work, which always has sounded on these ears as dry and stilted from other hands.

Under Rachmaninoff's fingers, however, the sonata became a living thing, conveying all the passion implicit in the title, perhaps as Beethoven himself intended it as he dreamed it through.

There was little of the modern in the program, if you except the works written by the artist himself, and they were less modern than contemporary. There were two strongly contrasting Etudes—Tableau C. Major and Tableau E. Flat Major—Humoresque, and Moment Musicale, the latter two newly revised.

Need Not Rely on Reputation

That section of the program was of remarkable beauty and virtuosity, particularly the two Etudes, and brought strongly to mind that Rachmaninoff need not rely solely on his reputation as a performer to establish his immortality.

The program in its entirety seemed to grow in beauty as it progressed until the two final numbers, both Liszt, brought to a climax a feeling of almost unbearable delight. Graceful and stately was his playing of the "Sonetto del Petrarca," in A flat major, and,

swirling with color, the Rhapsody No. 11 which spelled finis to the program.

A dip into Chopin gave the audience the Nocturne in D flat major and a pair of mazurkas, after the artist had rollicked through Mendelssohn's "Rondo Capriccioso," of blessed memory. Bach was present in the Organ Prelude and Fugue in A minor, as was Schubert, vicariously through Tausig, who wrote the variations of a theme of the beloved Teuton.

That was all of the listed numbers, if one is interested in a bald catalog. There was something else, however, which escapes listing. It was the soul of Rachmaninoff, made manifest through those marvelous hands and that unquenchable virility.

Howes

Continued from Page One

may be. Last winter Russia seized various Baltic states and fought a war in Finland to make one of her other sea outlets more secure. The only nation threatening that outlet was Germany.

In the light of history still only a matter of months old, it hardly seems possible that Stalin feels that Russia's maritime future may be placed at the discretion of Hitler.

Moscow May Be Informed

It is possible, of course, that Moscow has been informed of exactly what the Germans propose to do in Rumania and elsewhere in the Balkans, and that nothing on the agenda seriously compromises the Russian position. Perhaps Hitler merely is making his South-eastern Europe communication lines more secure and tightening his grip on Southeastern Europe's resources. He may have no thought of bothering Turkey or Greece to the extent of pushing southward through them and into Asia.

If German staff plans do embrace such a project and Stalin hasn't let himself be beguiled by Nazi promises, then Russian participation in the war seems inevitable. The extent of the participation is another matter.

Russians Have Advantage

Lying on the flank of what