

Rachmaninoff Draws Large Audience Here

Liszt and Chopin
Compositions Played

By GLENN DILLARD GUNN

Rachmaninoff, who addressed a sold-out house at Constitution Hall yesterday afternoon, is one of the two or three world renowned virtuosi who can lift the piano compositions of Liszt and Chopin to the expressive heights for which they were designed.

At 68 he still has the all-inclusive technical command of his instrument, a resource shared in like measure by only a few of his younger colleagues. He has a distinctive virility of tone which retains its character in the slighter inflections of power which it is his habit to employ with increasing frequency, and his gift of musical eloquence is untouched by the passing years.

Compositions Hailed

The imagination that has so enriched the literature of his instrument and of the great orchestra discovers its most congenial stimuli in his own music. So long as he lives his eminent colleagues leave to him the public presentation of his piano compositions and this is matter for regret; for they contain a world of beauty that concert world should share oftener.

Yesterday he played only two of his Etudes Tableaux, those in B and D minor, opus 39, and the exquisite little G major Prelude, which he seems to love. Naturally the audience responded more warmly to the familiar Chopin and Liszt pieces. He opened the recital with his transcription of the Bach E major Partita for solo violin of which he has made three vigorous yet charming piano pieces. The D minor Sonata, opus 31, of Beethoven followed.

Rachmaninoff never has been a conscientious Beethoven interpreter. It is his habit to revise the characteristic marks of expression and to alter the indicated tempo to suit his own temperamental limitations. Such liberties he can allow himself, playing the music as he feels it rather than according to the carefully prescribed directions of the composer and the entirely sound traditions of style based thereon. The example is dangerous for youth to follow—exaggerations which Rachmaninoff can justify to himself, perhaps, if not to his fellow artists.

Waltz on Program

For the record it should be stated that his Chopin group comprised a little C minor Polonaise, the F sharp Nocturne, and the C sharp minor Scherzo—which he made a notable example of dramatic virtuosity—and the Liszt numbers were "The Forgotten Waltz," played so swiftly the performance hardly revived the memory, the superb Sonetta del Petracca in E, and the Tarantella from the Venice and Naples suite.

The encores added an exquisite account of one of the four C sharp minor Mazurkas of Chopin, his own setting of a Tchaikowsky Humoresque, and the C sharp minor Prelude, now become a traditional closing number for all his recitals.