

-:- MUSIC -:-

Sergei Rachmaninoff was a revelation in the program he played Monday evening in Northrop auditorium, before an audience that filled every seat in the huge hall. Many doubtless came to see as much as to hear the famous Russian and they were well repaid by the sheer magnificence of his performances.

It is possible that this great Russian artist made errors during the course of his program. Personally, I don't care whether he did or not, for there was a splendor in his playing that quite obliterated trivial deficiencies, if there were any.

Rachmaninoff appears like a tired giant when he steps on the platform. He has the lassitude of one who has borne his share in the world's turmoils and would like to find some quiet resting place.

We cannot place any credence in appearances, however, for once the fingers of this artist fell on the keyboard he became transfigured, not externally, but he opens up the floodgates of inspired music as few now living are able to do. He makes any composer live again, and I can imagine it was not a very easy matter to draw inspiration from the Beethoven sonata Op. 31 No. 2, for the simple reason it has less inspiration in it than we expect to find.

Realizing that we may call down the condemnation of pianists on our devoted head, I maintain that the chief interest in the presentation of this sonata was the performance, which had a grandeur all its own. In the interpretation of this work, as in all others, Rachmaninoff followed no beaten path. He is strictly an individualist, who assumes complete charge over his actions and speaks with authority that must be recognized whether we agree with him or not.

The performer's own transcription of the sonata for violin in E major revealed a most astonishing Bach to us. Why the man's sense of humor, his hearty enjoyment of life, his engaging friendliness, yea even a sort of irrepressible gayety came out of the music and flooded the entire hall with a sort of care-free rapture. It was a new Bach, a real fellow, with whom one could enjoy many a pleasant and festive evening.

Nor can we say less concerning the Schubert Rondo, which was nothing less than a living, vivid cascade of rippling notes rushing and tumbling over each other like waterfalls of beautiful pearls. This is no exaggeration. How can a man, apparently as aged as Rachmaninoff, convey the impression of eternal and vivifying youth as he did in the performance of this extremely difficult and beautiful selection? That he does work this magic all who heard him will admit and then he passed to the exquisite pianistic compositions of Chopin with as complete idealization of their char-

acter as he had shown in everything preceding.

The Valse in E flat major was a delicious example of control over fascinating color changes, each reflecting some mood or nuance. The Nocturne in F sharp major, in which he took liberties unheard of in our experience, revealed a flashing spirit of romance and beauty. Austere as the pianist may seem his conceptions of beauty are ravishing and he catches these phases, conjures with them and makes of them emblems of immortality. And again the Ballade in A flat major found him no less eager and no less well equipped to sing this music into our souls.

His own Variation on a Theme by Corelli, a Scherzo by Borodin the Weber-Tausig "Invitation to the Dance" were presented with ever increasing revelation of powers we had hardly dreamed of in this artist's interpretations. The program closed with one of the loveliest settings of the Scherzo from Mendelssohn's "Midsummer Night's Dream," music by Rachmaninoff himself. In some respects this was the crown of all his efforts; full of grace and witchery, of insinuating and all permeating charm, it was a fitting conclusion to a memorable program.

JAMES DAVIES.

AMUSEMENTS

ENDS WED. 5 P. M.—ANN HARD

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