

Rachmaninoff Is Exciting as Of Yore

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Program

Organ Fantasia and Fugue	Bach-Liszt
Sonata, opus 109	Beethoven
Polonaise in C minor	Chopin
Mazurka	Chopin
Rondo, opus 18	Chopin
Four Etudes-Tableaux	Rachmaninoff
Sonnetto del Petrarca	Liszt
Etude, E major	Paganini-Liszt
Invitation to the Dance	Weber-Tausig

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By STEWART B. SABIN

Once again last night Sergei Rachmaninoff played for a Rochester audience in the Eastman Theater as of late years; one remembers well how he played for more than one audience in Convention Hall.

He remains still the most startling of attention of the greater pianists of today, remains this in spite of the fact that his playing last night was at times uneven in accuracy and somewhat lacking in the certitude of purpose that he has shown so long. But his playing was likewise exciting because it was shot through in everything he played with beauty, dramatic suggestion and eloquence. His opening Bach-Liszt started with a bit of instable playing, gathered to some splendid moments in the prelude while the fugue was finely played.

The Beethoven sonata as Rachmaninoff played was filled with revelations of insight into the music, even if at times one felt that he was less interested than when some nubbins of power and beauty was under his hands from the music text. His Chopin, not the numbers which some of us would choose to hear him play, was made live music. The audience liked the rondo which he made sound better than it really ought to. The audience got one extra number after it.

After intermission Rachmaninoff played four of his pieces musically interesting aside from the admirable chance afforded for technical prowess. He did certain things with piano tone in the following Liszt sonnetto that are seldom done. He can repeat the same tone a number of times with little change of power but change of character; he can deliver a sentimental melody so that there is no bathos.

The Paganini-Liszt etude is a pianistic feat and in the Weber-Tausig music at the end he became technically prodigious. Rachmaninoff can inject beauty into tone played at a tremendous pace beyond the power of any pianist the writer hears.

The audience had to work diligently and long for extra numbers. The C sharp minor prelude which is generally Rachmaninoff's signal that he is through for the evening came first; then finally he played again.

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