

Rachmaninoff Acclaimed In Refreshing Program

Great Russian Pianist Is Brilliantly Impressive in Numbers Which Demand Virtuosity and Thoughtfulness.

BY ALICE EVERSMAN.

WHEN Rachmaninoff announces a recital program, his admirers can always count on hearing works not scheduled so often by other pianists that the bloom has been brushed off by too much repetition. Usually compositions avoided because of their technical demands are what he delights in presenting and last night's program at Constitution Hall was one of these. The great Russian pianist selected not only works that were refreshing because seldom played here, but which drew on that superb and astounding technical endowment of his to the fullest extent.

Rachmaninoff has been heard in more genial moods than that of last evening but never so brilliantly impressive. The magnificent mechanism which he has developed to the highest point of virtuosity transcended the mere form so freely that one was led along a path of completed musical sound that was the ordinary classification perfected. His extraordinary dexterity was allied to the thought in the phrase with a smoothness that denied any difficulty in the uniting.

Plays Bach Fugue.

Beginning with the Liszt arrangement of Bach's "Organ Fantasia and Fugue in G Minor," he brought into the "Great Fugue" the crystal fulguration of his finger adroitness and his fine sense of balanced contrasts. His choice of the Beethoven "Sonata, opus 109" was a happy one in that the lyric beauty of one of the last sonatas written by that master creator stood out prominently against the sterner background that Bach provided.

One might have wished that Rachmaninoff had arrived at the poetic mood which found full play in the Chopin group for his interpretation of the sonata. The grace of the first

movement, the melodic line of the Adagio and the tranquility of the Andante fell short of perfection by reason of a certain brittleness in tone quality that nevertheless gave lustre to the more fiery Prestissimo.

But with the "Polonaise in C minor" by Chopin and suavity of touch which he commands when at his beat came forth in full beauty and his playing of the Chopin numbers progressed to an apex in the final "Rondo, opus 16."

Own Compositions.

Of his "Four Etudes Tableaux, opus 33" it is told in von Rieseemann's "Rachmaninoff's Recollections" that many of them were inspired by Boecklin's paintings. In the group programmed yesterday, the G minor "can be traced back to 'Morning.'

Sometimes the inspiration for the 'Etudes Tableaux' have been taken from pictures of real life or from fairy tales, as the E flat minor which represents the gay bustle of a Russian fair."

The four presented last evening, the C sharp minor, G minor, E flat minor and E flat major are rich in fantasy of idea and of harmonic invention woven into a texture that demands a pianist's full resources. The E flat major formed a climax for the group, a brilliant creation that aroused the audience to unrestrained enthusiasm.

Liszt's "Sonetto del Petrarca No. 2," the Paganini-Liszt "Etude in E major" and the Liszt "Rhapsodie No. 12" concluded the program, the three numbers bringing the artist's superfine musical sensitiveness to its highest peak. Numerous encores lengthened the program to the delight of the many admirers of the great Russian who filled the hall.

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