

Music News And Views

By ROGER S. VREELAND

RACHMANINOFF HEARD IN NEWARK

The audience turned out to be just another lot of sentimentalists last night at the Mosque, Newark, and Sergei Rachmaninoff was the same old fellow we have heard about for some time. "Old", be it not misunderstood, is a term of affection, most different in meaning from elderly—which the 69-year-old pianist is not. He played his Second Concerto, C minor, with the Philadelphia Orchestra, Eugene Ormandy conducting, in the second program of L. Bamberger & Co.'s 1936-37 series.

When the concerto was over and it was time to pick up and go home, the three thousand sentimentalists didn't budge. A sustained and insistent applause began, swelling in pitch and volume only at the times Rachmaninoff reappeared, and they were five times with long moments between. They hoped he would encore with a solo, but he declined to break the convention that stands for that type of program.

Rachmaninoff did not waver from the traditional Rachmaninoff poise. Although there was unrestrained applause between movements he remained seated, merely lowering his head for a moment without looking at the audience (one might have thought he resented the interruption), and then he nodded to Mr. Ormandy who immediately lifted the baton.

During the Dvorak symphony, preceding, the audience showed little respect to the convention against applause.

Remarks about Rachmaninoff's playing would be little else than superfluous, for the great pianist always imparts so much and with such unvarying mastery.

As Charles O'Connell says in his book on symphonies, "to hear Rachmaninoff himself play this concerto is an experience which no lover of the piano can ever forget."

What music lovers could not be sentimentalists on such an occasion as last night? Even if some of those folks who "just can't see anything in that classical stuff" were dragged against their will into the Mosque by their relatives, they must have at least been impressed by the knowledge they were listening to and seeing a great pianist and composer performing one of his own great compositions, with a great orchestra, and that this was a kind of privilege to be cherished in the memory.

The next concert in the Bamberger series will be "La Traviata" by the Metropolitan Opera Association, with Vina Bovy, Lawrence Tibbett, and Nino Martini, Tuesday night, January 26, at the Mosque.

Fugue on a Theme by Handel", and six Etudes of Chopin, concluding with the "Winter Wind". He played with good understanding and well devised outlines, with a technique suggestive of favorable things to come, especially when he grows more accustomed to audiences, and is able to release the slight tension that he was not quite successful in freeing yesterday.

Gelrud played Mendelssohn's E minor concerto; Canzonetta from Tschairowsky's concerto, and "Gypsy Airs", Sarasate.

Now in the process of earning his doctor's degree at Columbia, and teaching at the same time, Gelrud does not expect to make his formal debut for at least four or five years.

Gelrud portrayed a highly artistic sense, and he produced tones and phrases that were indeed satisfying, although it could not be said he did so consistently throughout his numbers. He was best in the concerto.

The Club's Music Department is to be congratulated on the fine programs it is bringing its patrons. Yesterday's audience was not only larger than usual, but was markedly receptive. Both performers were called upon for encores. Mr. Gelrud was accompanied by Thomas Scherman.

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