

Rachmaninoff Stirs Wonder Of Audience

Famed Composer Exhibits
Great Creative Mind
in Action

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There is something almost legendary about the somber Russian composer, Sergel Rachmaninoff, who was soloist at the all-Russian program given by the Minneapolis Symphony Orchestra in Northrop auditorium Friday night. His presence on the concert platform inspires both awe and wonder. It is as though the brooding soul of old Russia had incarnated in this taciturn genius. Only a few men in every century become truly representative of a race, but these few will have such an effect upon the imagination of their contemporaries that they will seem to them to be legendary supermen. Rachmaninoff belongs in this class.

As an introduction to Rachmaninoff's appearance, Leon Barzin conducted with exceptional spirit and mettle the Overture to "Russian and Ludmilla" by Glinka. There was real virtuosity displayed in the rushing string passages that illuminate this overture.

Dominates Audience

From the moment Rachmaninoff stalked onto the stage to settle down at the piano and play his own C minor Concerto, to his last bow in response to a thunderous applause, he completely dominated the vast audience. To hear him play was to witness a great creative mind in action. There was no display of technique for its own sake—only deeply moving musical thoughts projected with the utmost sincerity.

The orchestra released that surge of yearning melodies in the first movement against which Rachmaninoff used the piano with noble discretion, blending its tones with the orchestral background, and yet keeping them distinct enough to give the desired contrast of timber. The simplest passages, which under less inspired hands might have become commonplace and dull, would radiate an inner beauty—transformed as they were into significant meaning by the sheer power of his creative imagination.

Praises Barzin

Even intrinsically interesting compositions like Moussorgsky's Prelude to "Khovantehina" and the powerful B minor symphony by Boreidin were rather eclipsed by Rachmaninoff's personality. Consciously Russian in tone, the symphony held the interest by its solidly constructed movements, its orchestration and its broad melodic strokes. The Scherzo was perhaps played at a rather slow tempo for prestissimo, thus diminishing the amusing effect of the rapidly repeated notes and the droll turns. The last two movements, using a tremendous span of orchestra tone and ending in the traditional full orchestra at full force, were somewhat roughly but exceedingly well performed. Mr. Barzin should be complimented both for the quality of the program he presented and for his excellent conducting.