

RACHMANINOFF IS 'ALIVE,' JAMS HALL

Pianist Gives Vigorous Performance, Hears Own Work

(Reprinted from Yesterday's Late Edition)

BY HERBERT ELWELL

Packed to the doors last night, Severance Hall resounded with salvos of applause for Rachmaninoff, who, appearing as soloist with the Cleveland Orchestra, performed his own Rhapsody on a Paganini theme, and heard his Symphony No. 3 given a splendid performance under Rodzinski. Both works were composed within the last three years, and neither had been heard here before.

In two places the orchestra program note headings inform us that Rachmaninoff is "now living." Accuracy is a virtue. But in this case the understatement involved can hardly pass unnoticed. If one may judge by the decisiveness of his attack at the piano, the rhythmic verve of his playing, as well as by the amplitude and adroitness of his music, this veteran composer-pianist is apparently living very well and very vigorously, especially for an artist who has passed the three-score mark.

His rhapsodic variations, through which he weaves the medieval chant, "Dies irae," are ingeniously contrived for virtuosic display, and they were performed with impressive brilliance and authority. The symphony often is attractively melodious and deftly orchestrated, recalling many of the characteristics of his earlier symphonic works. Rodzinski gave it all it deserved.

There is little new, however, in either composition. The subjects are banal, the developments being worked out with such well known devices as to suggest only a mastery of platitude. At the same time, the overwhelming majority who seem to find sincere and intense enjoyment in this music must have some reason for liking it.

It is, of course, extremely well behaved music. And though skirting the edges of melancholy and languishing sentiment, it always offers a sense of security in the midst of what might be tragic. Here is perhaps the secret of its popularity. That there is a deep-seated need for this sort of thing must be recognized—even by those who are unsympathetic to elaborate repetitions of what has already been said in music. All that can really be objected to in it is the decep-

<https://www.newspapers.com/image/1061155012/>

