

Performance of Eminent Pianist Attracts Dayton Music Lovers

By A. S. Kany.

DAYTON paid tribute to the genius of what undoubtedly must be considered the world's greatest living solo artist in providing a large, attentive and enthusiastic audience to hear Sergei Rachmaninoff, Russian pianist-composer, in Memorial hall Monday night. His appearance marked the third number of the current J. H. Thuman Artist Series.

What would have been an exhausting evening's work for one much younger, granted he could give such a performance, rolled and rippled with the utmost ease from the dexterous fingers of this tall, gaunt, austere player, who at 64 apparently is just at the peak of his long career.

Here is consummate artistry, but it is an artistry backed by thorough and intelligent knowledge of music, from the fundamentals up through all its many branches of endeavor, and back of all that shall we call it a poetic nature that finds its expression in a medium more beautiful though more ephemeral than the printed words of great literature.

Masterful Manner.

Rachmaninoff opened his program rather simply, with the "Weeping, Plaints, Sorrows, Fears" prelude of Liszt, an emotional "pianorama," if we may Winchellize a bit, in which there was opportunity to acquaint the audience with the masterful manner in which he can slip from crashing chords to the most delicate pianissimo.

Three movements of Bach's "Italian Concerto" followed, the fleet allegro moderato, the more measured tread of the andante and the lightning-like rapidity of the presto. Then came the most gorgeous of the extended numbers,

Beethoven's No. 2 "Sonata, with its light and melodious allegro and adagio movements and the sprightly allegretto, in which the pianist's hands crept almost uncannily over the keyboard like a huge spider striking victims with absolute surety.

A prodigious offering, too, was the Chopin "Scherzo in C-sharp Minor," with its great outburst of heavily chorded measures and its rapid runs anywhere from half to full length of the keyboard. In vaudeville, acrobats often were wont to announce a stunt by remarking, "the next trick is impossible." We were reminded somewhat of that instance in this number.

Sheer Artistry.

Even the coldest admirer of Debussy could give nothing but the highest commendation for the sheer artistry exhibited in his playing of four numbers of the "Suite Bergamasque," especially the familiar "Clair de Lune." Followed then the three thundering scale-descending chords of the favorite "Prelude in C Minor" and the audience sat taut in admiration of the sympathetic interpretation of his own beloved work. The player's own "Oriental Sketch," a fast, fantastic phantasy, followed.

Concluding numbers were the "Voices of the Woods" and "Dance of the Gnomes," both by Liszt, wherein certain dexterous finger maneuvers overshadowed all that had gone before in this line. But most glorious of the entire program was his "Liebestraum" encore, holding the audience in breathless attention by the sheer magnificent — and simplicity — of its interpretation.

Owing to the fact that Kerstin Thorborg, booked as the next at-

traction on the course, cannot secure release from the Metropolitan, Mr. Thuman has arranged an entirely new line-up for the closing concert December 8. It will consist of Erika Morini, rated the greatest living woman violinist, and Helen Gahagan, who ascended from the stage to opera, with a brief motion picture experience between the two.

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