

### Pianistic Genius of Rachmaninoff Amazingly Shown At Recital Here

By Dr. Herbert Sanders, F.R.C.S.  
When Rachmaninoff appeared on the platform of the Massey Theatre last evening he was greeted by an audience of no large size that it was obvious the music-lovers of the Capital were cognizant of the real greatness of the visiting artist. It is an indubitable fact that Rachmaninoff, both as a composer and artist, is a figure of world significance. He seems to have attained the highest point that human intelligence and skill can reach. Full of genius, of accomplishment, grand and liberal, he has not only followed the traditions of the great composers and great exponents but he has added to them something of a distinctly individual, inspiring and enduring quality.

Notwithstanding the size of the audience was not entirely due to the fact that it is appreciated to the full the exalted rank which Rachmaninoff holds in the realm of music; many must have been there because his reputation is colored with something of a tragic and romantic background.

**Pied Beauty.**  
They knew that Rachmaninoff was compelled during the Russian revolution to flee from Moscow and that the new regime took his property and removed his every other source of income. The penniless musician managed to cross the Russian frontier into Sweden. He later found his way to Copenhagen in Denmark, where a favorable opportunity to visit America brought him to New York. Some musicians have genius without romance, some have romance without genius; Rachmaninoff has the supremely attractive powers of both genius and romance.

Even before he begins to play, Rachmaninoff brings the audience's attention to subjugation. As he crosses the platform to the Steinway grand from which he is to create imperishable memories, his tall spare figure, his grave aquiline face, his erect bearing—characteristic of a student in communion with his thoughts—all arrest the attention of the admiring and expectant throng.

**Choral Preludes.**  
It was only right to expect that one of the greatest composers of the day should open his program with representative works from the fountain of all true modern music—Johann Sebastian Bach. Instead of taking a prelude and fugue from the immortal "48" or one of the colorful organ preludes or fantasias and fugues for the organ transcribed by Liszt, the composer-pianist selected two Organ Choral Preludes: (a) "Now Comes the Gentlest" and "Rejoice Beloved Christian." "Now Comes the Gentlest" is one of the most beloved pieces in this form. The polyphony is usually tender and the chorale itself has an inherent pathos. Rachmaninoff played the prelude in a truly devotional manner and to some of the most beautiful harmonies he gave a sincerely poignant note. "Rejoice Beloved Christian" was played with an appropriately joyous expression. The performer played the chorale in the bass with an artistically reserved pre-eminence, while simultaneously balancing the general tone to give the effect of brilliancy and festivity.

As I listened to the master play these two choral preludes, I recalled the contention of Heine that it took much sorrow to make out of his little songs. I could not help but feel that into the making of Rachmaninoff's interpretation of these preludes something more than technique entered. His sorrow and life's conquering power were undoubtedly playing a part in creating the finished product.

**Sonata Quasi Fantasia.**  
After hearing the Bach Choral Preludes, to listen to Liszt's Sonata Quasi Fantasia (after reading Dante) is rather like descending from the Mount of Transfiguration and entering a garish gash—the artificial modern city. Liszt wrote to move in his Fantasia. Last wrote to astonish, and he was successful. He gave us a fantastic, sparkling tissue, a dash less than usual of sentimentality, and instead of eloquence he gives us a magnum opus.

Rachmaninoff could not have been attracted to this work because of its intrinsic quality. He must have been drawn to it because of its dramatic for virtuosity, for which it is a perfect vehicle. The opening recitative-like passage in octaves were played with a strongly individualized rhythm, with intense passion, with commanding authority. Certainly the music is full of sound and very satisfying to the ear, but the Russian pianist fairly electrified his hearers. They were spellbound with astonishment.

The delivery of this dramatic solo was a revelation of digital dexterity. The most intricate parts were passed off with the ease of a conjurer and in continual evidence were passed off with precision, scales thrillingly and impetuously alive. Every cadence, a thousand scintillations and almost everywhere brilliant and almost hair-raising bravuras. A luscious melody in the opening movement which succeeds the opening note, when Rachmaninoff played it, was a delight with its soft and flowing, its striking contrast of staccato, its hoarse explosive quality and its cumulative emotion that the virtuoso made spectacularly magnificent. It was an overwhelming tour de force. The audience greeted it with an enthusiastic boisterous applause that at all like the reserved demonstrations of enthusiasm or indifference common to the Capital.

**Chopin's Fantasia.**  
This fantasia is one of the highest expressions of Chopin's genius. It was alleged by Liszt that the opening march-like theme was the result of a quarrel and reconciliation between Chopin and George Sand. The first two bars represent the knocking on the door of the room in which the composer is dreaming at the piano and the next two represent the invitation to come in. George Sand with Liszt, side, Ford and others enter after which follow scenes of intercession, reproaches, silent appeals and finally reconciliation.

Rachmaninoff made the opening ball of arresting significance. He followed in the selected theme of something triple measure with a feeling, and increasing force and

velocity that must have been a valuable lesson to many of the mentally music students present. The heroic march with the many opportunities for diverse interpretation was played in a way that made most of those I have heard seem pitifully wrong.

As interpreted by Rachmaninoff, the fantasia is a work of amazing ability and dramatic grandeur reflected in the middle section with a short-cut of immeasurable love and longing. In this profound poetic expression, genius met genius—the Polish composer met the Russian pianist—and the result—a crowded moment of glorious life—could only be achieved when the mightiest music is interpreted by an affinity of transcendent genius.

**Two Chopin Etudes.**  
Next followed two études by Chopin: (a) the one in C sharp minor, and (b) the harp-like one in A flat. Rachmaninoff has a single soul. Everything he touches sings. He discovers melodic beauties in unexpected places, now a little motive in the bass, now perhaps a variant of it in an inner part, but wherever it is Rachmaninoff will find it and make its potential meaning a reality. The implications of this art that Chopin the Russian has demonstrated at home in lyric simplicity and these examples of true lyricism were in their own subjective way perhaps the optimum of the evening.

The performance of Chopin's C sharp minor Etude was a masterpiece of feeling. It was taken at a terrific tempo but the exacting octave passages were played with conspicuous clarity. The religious chorale-like middle theme were impressively rendered and the figured accompaniments were played in the cascades shot through with sunlight.

As its conclusion the performer was again differently applauded. The contributions from his own pen were tabular and his well-known prelude in C sharp minor. The fantasia has some subtle harmonies and active modulation. The ostinato figured bass supplies a characteristic rhythmic effect and the melody is of an unusually expressive type. Some choice bits of original harmony are found in the cadence.

**Popular Demonstration.**  
The opening motive of the popular prelude was the signal for the popular demonstration of approval and appreciation—a demonstration that was resumed at the close of the composer's modestist of the famous number.

It is noted that Rachmaninoff usually includes an item by Mendelssohn in his program. He did not on his last visit here. Mendelssohn though born in Hamburg a child of German parents, but his musical training was distinctly Russian. It is said to be seen from the "Pavane" that Mendelssohn wrote for the piano with an inventive plasticity, as well as with a genuine insight of a refined quality. Rachmaninoff brought out all the rhythmic beauty and originality of harmony of the contents with a sensitively refined taste. Some of the very soft passages were played with a transcendent delivery of tone that bordered on the ethereal.

The Strauss-Tausig, Value-Caprice and others brought to a recital of this character in words commensurate with its high quality would require more than the ability of a clever reporter or even a mentally alert critic; it would call for the pen of a poet. Unfortunately that is what the writer does not possess.

The recital was in the immediate presence of their Excellencies the Governor General and Vice-countess Willingdon.

- The Program.**  
1—Two Organ Choral Preludes: (a) Now Comes the Gentlest; (b) Rejoice Beloved Christian, Bach's Mass.  
2—Sonata Quasi Fantasia (After reading Dante), Liszt.  
3—Fantasia, Chopin.  
4—(a) Two Etudes, Chopin; (b) Robert, Chopin.  
5—Pavane, Chopin.  
6—Two Etudes Tableaux, Rachmaninoff.  
7—Value-Caprice No. 1, Strauss-Tausig.

### WOULD ABOLISH

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The machinery for war will provide for the bulk of disarmament at the first stage so that when this stage is realized there will remain to arm the armies of all states only the strictly necessary quantity of armament—mainly the given numerical strength of the armed forces for the following years. The abolition of the material part is understood to entail reducing it to such state as would exclude the possibility of using it for military purposes.

The convention provides for the preservation of hunting guns and revolvers for use in hunting and self-defense.

Regarding naval armaments, the project provides for the first phase abolition of battleships, cruisers and air craft carriers, and the destruction of all the material part of the ship equipment, artillery, munitions, mines and torpedoes.

**Four Guard Duty.**  
The third chapter deals with the organization of a guard. It provides for the abolition of various kinds of guard duty during the whole four-year period. The future numerical strength of each contingent shall be based upon their proportion to the population and their relation to the extent of the territory of the various countries. The guard is to be left only the simplest of modern arms.

The guard is understood not as belonging to an individual state, but must serve the needs of groups of states.

It is considered necessary to regulate full and general disarmament and to establish a special technical conditions of disarmament. It is proposed to create an international permanent consulting committee attached to it with the task of advising the states. The final chapter embodies provisions regarding the conclusion of additional convention on special questions connected with disarmament, the methods of ratification and the procedure for