

RUSSIAN PIANIST IN FINE CONCERT

Rachmaninoff Acclaimed by
Large Audience at Prin-
cess Theatre

Rachmaninoff, the gaunt Russian superman, played at the Princess Theatre yesterday afternoon. And from the first liquid notes of the Bach-Busoni preludes to the final crash of his own C sharp minor prelude an audience which filled orchestra and balconies listened spellbound, to break out in salvo after salvo of frenzied applause.

Rachmaninoff appeals to all. Perhaps not only on account of his virtuosity, his masterful interpretations of great music, his own compositions; but also because of his manners and the magnetic personality, which, in spite of his gauche walk and bearing, or maybe on that very account, place him in the front rank—a towering personage.

He seems to have reached the summit of his art. It would be difficult to conceive of finer playing. Rachmaninoff combines sympathy, soul, with phenomenal technical skill. The world watches, now, for his new creative work. Of his own compositions, besides the celebrated prelude, which was given as an encore, he played two etudes. One of these he played here a year ago, the other was new to Montrealers. In this he revealed unmistakably his faith and loyalty to music, not of the so-called modern kind. A composition full of charm, brilliantly played.

The programme was admirably selected. The interpretation of the two organ choral preludes by Bach, arranged by Busoni, was that of a great and mature artist, faultless, gripping in sheer simplicity and sacred grandeur. This was followed by the "Fantasia quasi Sonata," by Liszt, inspired by the reading of Dante. The awe-inspiring mysticism of an "Inferno" set to music by the great German, prodigiously interpreted; the baffling, almost uncanny technical powers of Rachmaninoff must have been tested to the utmost; but there was nothing to indicate that he had found the task hard.

SHOWED NO FATIGUE.

A minute, or so, of a pause, and he sat down again, struck a couple of chords, and broke into the glorious Chopin Fantasia. To the almost delirious acclamations, Rachmaninoff responded merely with deep bows a sweeping glance to take in orchestra and balconies, and the faintest suspicion of a bashful smile.

The second part of the programme contained the "Fairy Tale" sonata by Medtner, two Chopin etudes, two etudes by the artist and a valse-caprice by Strauss, arranged by Tausig. Rachmaninoff knew that he could not escape with that, and he cheerfully responded to the "bis" calls by playing several encores, including a valse-brillante by Chopin and his own prelude—the C sharp minor.

As soon as he had struck the first chord, a storm of applause broke out. He played on, and who would undertake to criticize Rachmaninoff's playing of the Rachmaninoff prelude?

The Medtner sonata was played without intermission between the movements. The Chopin etudes, which fitted splendidly in the programme, included the mournful C minor (Opus 25, No. 12).

The old Vienna waltz was a triumph in arrangement and interpretation, and it afforded a fine ending to a great concert.

Then, of course, came the encores.