

One Hears Rachmaninoff

PEB: We arrive at 8:10 o'clock, as we are informed that the concert is to begin promptly at 8:15. There are also several other early arrivals. Maybe their clock was fast, too. We are ushered into our after-the-boom seats and our first official act is to give the remaining part of the audience the once over. Really, there is some wonderful scenery to be seen and we are glad to be a little early. It is now 8:15 and we turn our attention to that part of the auditorium reserved for Mr. Rachmaninoff, who, we had heard, was doing right well in the concert business. To our surprise he had not appeared. We look at our program, glancing at our watch, and, sure enough, he is supposed to be casting sweet melodies our way right now. Oh well, we must allow for people like Mr. Rachmaninoff and Mr. James Walker of New York City, N. Y. It is their privilege to be late if they want to be. We again turn our attention to our surrounding neighbors and are surprised to see people still arriving. Evidently they are not aware that the concert was supposed to have begun at 8:15. A party of young maidens of tender age seat themselves in front of us. From their comments we are led to believe that our Mr. R. is merely waiting for them to arrive. Our fellow citizens are still filing in; tire trouble, no doubt. The speedometer on our timepiece registers 8:45. We hear cheering. Rachmaninoff! He receives a tremendous ovation. How dignified and assured he seems. How tall he is, and how stooped are his shoulders, mute testimony to long years of constant practice and tedious labor. Why are there not more Rachmaninoffs, Kreislers, and Paderewskis who have the infinite patience to give 20 or 30 years to the perfection of their natural abilities? And yet they come. We realize now that the people he is to entertain, and not Rachmaninoff, are causing the delay. Quiet, at last, and the nimble, intelligent fingers dart here and there on the keyboard, pause, withdraw, strike again, run up and down, leaving in their wake exquisite delightful, and stirring melodies, fitting tribute to the master mind that guides them. Our little friends in front are tremendously bored. They yawn and amusedly discuss the poor fools who are evidently enjoying this tiresome thing. Time passes quickly, too quickly. It is 10 o'clock. The last straggler has wandered in and taken his seat unmindful of the admiring glances of his fellow countrymen. Rachmaninoff resumes. Our attention is divided between the music and the flying fingers of the musician; at times they defy the human eye to follow them; greased lightning at play; such tireless strength. Small wonder that he can tap a half-inch plate glass with one finger and break it. The Prelude; his own. The crowd voices its approval. Three young ladies to our rear ask each other, "What is this he is playing, my dear?" "Sh, search me." All too soon he is taking his last bow. No more encores, for fingers of iron eventually become tired. We mingle with the throng, all thoughts of resentment against our fellow men gone, engulfed by and submerged in a liquid stream of melody flowing from the soul of divine music. We did not learn what make of piano the young man was demonstrating.

JIMMY.