

## RACHMANINOFF IS INIMITABLE

Famous Russian Pianist Impresses Capacity Audience At Vancouver Theatre.

### SUPERLATIVE ART

By H. J.

That the piano as a music-making instrument is thoroughly qualified to satisfy the requirements of the most exacting professional artist as well as the needs of the average music-lover was amply demonstrated Tuesday night in Vancouver Theatre when Sergei Rachmaninoff, distinguished Russian pianist-composer, provided a capacity audience with sheer enjoyment and educational profit in a programme that for design and manner of performance has been surpassed by few of his contemporaries visiting this city within the memory of this reviewer.

It was a triumphant occasion for Rachmaninoff, so much so indeed, that the vast majority of the listeners would not leave the auditorium until the artist found himself reluctantly compelled to add to his extras the inevitable Prelude in C Sharp Minor. No one could blame him for yielding to the anticipated temptation, although possibly many listeners prayed fervently that he would not do so and for obvious reasons.

But fortunately Rachmaninoff gave the immensely popular piece in his own inimitable manner and without the slightest traces of those hackneyed qualities which invariably invest it when it is played by lesser lights. For my own part, I candidly felt that the old Prelude took on new and fresher meaning, which is a great deal to be thankful for, considering the fact that I have listened to it innumerable times. So much by way of introduction to the artist's performance of the general programme.

#### MEMORABLE PLAYING.

Rachmaninoff's remarkable technical skill and interpretative gifts are so familiar to students of the keyboard in these parts that it is unnecessary to again enlarge upon them at this time. He is an artist who always impresses you that he has thoroughly assimilated the inner significance of his music. He realizes the importance of rhythm and its functions, which is not only to keep the pace moving, but to synchronize movements and hold things together. His range of dynamics is enormous and in dramatic and poetic moods he is always master of the situation.

For his chief programme numbers the Russian pianist gave us some memorable playing in the Beethoven Sonata in D Minor, Opus 31, No. 2, a group of admirably-chosen Chopin pieces, the Bach-Busoni Organ Choral in G Minor, three welcome Liszt items and numbers by Medtner, Rachmaninoff and Balakireff.

The Beethoven Sonata, a work cast in the grand style—reaching at times to the sublime, and said to be prized by the composer as his finest—was elucidated with transcendental beauties—the first movement with its restless dramatic mood, the second with serene qualities, and the third breathing the spirit of phantasy. It was the embodiment of perfect balance of design, secure in delineative introspection and abounding in shimmering tone colors.

#### FINE CHOPIN MUSIC.

The Bach-Busoni Organ Choral was noteworthy for its purity of style, clean sentiment and masterly workmanship while the fine Chopin Polonaise in F Sharp was conspicuous for its glamorous tone, flaring brilliance and nationalistic atmosphere. In the Polish composer's Mazurka in A Flat Major, the Valse in A Flat Major and Scherzo in C Minor, Rachmaninoff, moreover, played with those melodic and rhythmic charms which are his enviable possessions. The Valse he enunciated in entrancing fashion, with gliding grace, arch coquetry and warmth.

In Liszt's Onseques, Opus 34, No. 7, the Valse Opulente, and Murmuring Woods, the artist again rose to lofty technical and interpretive heights, the funeral music being specially gripping in its appeal. The pianist's own Prelude in G Flat Major and Etude-Tableau in E Flat Minor, were also expressively given, while the Medtner Fairy Tale in B Minor and the Balakireff Oriental fantasy, "Islamey," were rendered with vivid imagination and sweeping stretches of color.

Without elaborating further on the performance of Rachmaninoff, it is enough to say that here is a pianist whose art makes a stronger appeal to the intellect than it does to the emotions, for which thank heaven in these days of gross materialism and superficiality. The reception accorded the artist must be recorded as a credit to Vancouver music lovers.