

Rachmaninoff Is Destined To Be Immortal, Declares This Reviewer

BY IRL ALLISON

Sergei Rachmaninoff, Titan pianist and composer extraordinary, played a concert here last night that captivated a West Texas audience of near fifteen hundred in the Simmons university auditorium. He appeared under the sponsorship of the Simmons artist course management.

In the presentation of pianists in even the large cities, local impresarios are always apprehensive of their drawing power, since, in spite of the preponderance in number of piano students over those learning other instruments, the people do not flock to hear pianists nearly so readily as they do violinists and singers.

This anomaly exists the world over, in music steeped European as well as in the "young-in-art" American or Australian centers. Just why this is true is not difficult to explain. Violin music is mainly made up of melodies that appeal to the heart. Songs carry their messages on the wings of words. Each has the accompaniment carried on the piano, an instrument of entirely different tonal quality, which renders the songful parts of violin and vocal literature outstanding, therefore more easily comprehended. The appeal therefore is more direct to the heart of the listener.

Too often the message in a piano score is lost in the maze of accompaniment material. This opportunity for a show of his technical armament beguiles the pianist, causing him to seek to win his audience by his gymnastic skill. Such pianism may dazzle, producing the same sensations in the hearers as do daring circus feats high in the air in the big top, but it does not bring tears to the eyes. We like to weep, and that artist, be he musician or actor, who thus stirs our emotions is called great.

Rachmaninoff the Great.

Rachmaninoff has this characteristic. He never fails to drive home the melody of a composition. His playing therefore stirs the soul. Rachmaninoff, consequently, is a great pianist. Being great, he draws a crowd.

For this self-same reason Rachmaninoff is a great creator of music, as well as a recreator. He never fails to inject into his compositions song themes that touch the heart—plaintive, appealing melodies so to speak. Yet neither his playing nor his composing is ever overfraught with sordid sentimentality. He is always virile, even in his Chopin whispers.

Rachmaninoff, at the piano or manuscript in hand, is always a singer—a Russian singer, whose colossal mastery of the key-board is invariably the servant of his voice. He molds his musical thoughts with hands of love and strums the heart-strings of his audience with magnet fingers.

The Grand Manner.

He has the semblance of great-

ness in his manner. Like that of a great general, a childlike simplicity gleams through his austere countenance. He stumbles out on to the stage like Millet's "Man with the Hoe," come to life. With the same awkwardness he seats himself at the piano. He stoops his tall frame to play—

His fingers glide over the keys or pluck a massive chord. He no longer seems awkward. He has found his element. He is at home, where he is the lord and master—

He is a cultured Turk in his har-em. His 88 mistresses—the ivories—respond to his suave caresses or his blundering commands like snowflakes before the tyrant wind—

His touch is mellow, cocoonous, rippling, piercing, sharp, velvety, brittle, gentle, glassy, rich, tinkling, liquid, hard, soulful, capricious—chameleon-like, as changeful as the whims of the cultured Turk's wives—

He is a man of rock—exteriorly, his face, sphinx-like, wherein lives a poet—a rock, but a rock with a soul; indeed, man enough to bid fair for a lower berth on the train destined for the realm of the immortals. Rachmaninoff!

Program.

He played a romantic program ranging from the thirty-two variations of Beethoven to the rhapsodies of Liszt. It might be termed a hackneyed collection of selections, if there could be an audience of the one per cent musical population of the U. S. A. assembled in a single group to hear him. As is, it will be a hundred years before any piano composition may be termed hackneyed. Not forty-four one-hundredths of one per cent of the average audience knows even the third "Dream of Love" of Liszt, much less the Chopin "A Flat Ballade." Yet there was not one of the often heard numbers that was not new under the master's hand. He responded to the heavy applause with four encores: "Trolka Ride" (Tchaikowsky), "Gopak" (Moussorgsky), "The Smugglers" (Schumann - Tausig), and "The Bumble-Bee" (Rimsky-Rachmaninoff).

Kreisler will be the next attraction on the Simmons university artist course. His date is February 10.

Former Mayor of Big Lake Injured

SAN ANGELO, Jan. 27.—(P)—J. Milton Moore, former mayor of Big Lake, was brought here last night critically injured, after his car collided head-on with a truck about four miles from McCamey. Several men on the truck were injured slightly.

ROYAL NEIGHBORS TO MEET

Royal Neighbors will hold their regular meeting tonight at 7:30 at the I. O. O. F. building, Mrs. F. E. Cowsert, orator.