

RACHMANINOFF EARNS OVATION

Famous Russian Pianist
Charms Capacity Audi-
ence at Strand.

IMPECCABLE ART

By R. J.

What an edifying thing it would be if more of the pianists of the day appeared on the stage with the humility in the face of their task evinced by Rachmaninoff when he was welcomed by a capacity audience at his recital in Strand Theatre Wednesday night? The sincerity of this great Russian artist, his simplicity and greatness of spirit have endeared him not only to his own generation but also to younger individuals.

The enthusiasm with which Rachmaninoff was received must have warmed his heart. To some perhaps it will not appear strange but peculiarly fitting that such an art and temperament should receive that homage of the rising generation for, of course, Rachmaninoff is among the few last of a royal line. No pianist of the present time thinks and feels more consistently in the truly grand manner.

On this occasion the Russian master presented a programme of somewhat less exacting texture than he usually gives and while his playing in the early stages, especially in the Beethoven Variations in C Minor with which he began, appeared to be somewhat lacking in its accustomed warmth and authority, it must be admitted that he settled down later and roused the listeners to a high pitch of admiration and enthusiasm with some memorable work.

It is not necessary to enlarge upon the technical and interpretative gifts of Rachmaninoff because these are only too well known to music lovers in these parts. He is a pianist who does not require to use the artificial masque for the simple reason that his sincerity and modesty are always vital contributing factors in the messages he delivers to his hearers.

The Beethoven Variations, which form really a kind of Chaconne almost entirely harmonic in style and are only identified with the theme by means of its sequential character, he gave with impeccable technical clarity, brilliant contrasts of tone and unforced sonorities. In the middle sections the artist rose to even greater heights, the concluding sections being expressively realized.

In the Schumann "Nocturne Opus

23" which followed, Rachmaninoff unmistakably revealed his feeling for the poetic mood, his playing here being notable for its imaginative grip and feeling for melodic values. The Schubert "Impromptu F Minor" he invested with shimmering color tints, dignity of phrasing and captivating beauty of tone while the Weber-Tausig "Invitation to the Dance" with its exhilarating rhythms and kaleidoscopic colors was elucidated with fascinating picturesque qualities. The Scherzo from Mendelssohn's "Midsummer Night's Dream" as transcribed by Rachmaninoff was moreover rendered with rare rhythmic buoyancy and atmospheric charm.

In the final division of his programme Rachmaninoff gave two of his own Preludes in his inimitable manner thereafter providing his listeners with even greater delight in his illuminative conceptions of a popular Chopin "Nocturne" and "Ballad." And concluding the printed list came the Liszt "On a Sonnet of Petrarch" and one of the less familiar Rhapsodies which latter was given with delirious rhythmic sweep and brilliance of bravura.

In response to insistent recalls Rachmaninoff added a number of intriguing extras including his own popular Prelude which he is so fond of describing as his one "Indiscretion."

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