

RACHMANINOFF ENTHRALLS

HUGE AUDIENCE SPELLBOUND BY MASTER'S ART AT CONCERT IN STRAND THEATRE

By MARY H. T. ALEXANDER

When Rachmaninoff plays the whole world listens.

Vancouverites, however, were privileged to see as well as to hear him, when he appeared in recital in the Strand Theatre on Wednesday night. It was a huge audience.

Rachmaninoff gives his encores graciously but with dignified reserve. Bending his stately head, he bows before the clamor of acclaim as an Emperor might bow before the expressions of an adoring multitude. He appears to those who attend his recitals, always as the embodiment of all that is artistic in the world of music.

COMMANDING FIGURE

Commanding in figure, Rachmaninoff is interesting as a human being. As an artist he is the idolized of piano students. And on this occasion it was re-evidenced that the dignity of his position had been achieved by three things:

1. An innate sense of musical values.
2. The gift of concentrative power applied to his music, which in itself is the expression of genius.
3. His application of those advantages which must have accrued to one who was born to the purple of a splendid aristocratic regime. But money was not his goal in the beginning.

EXILED FROM RUSSIA

Prior to the Russian revolution the apex of his art had been reached, purely as an Art. Therefore the world today has to thank that cataclysmic time for sending Rachmaninoff out into a world of music lovers, and for the joy it has now in hearing him play.

His is a controlled force. It can be dynamic or delicate, subservient to a dominating will.

Weaving a spell on his audience the great pianist opened his program with Beethoven's "Variations in C minor," worked his way through a Schumann "Nocturne" to a Schubert "Impromptu" in F minor.

And as each succeeding number progressed, the growing tensivity of the pianist spread itself to the audience. Niceties of technique were admired. His virility of touch, his breadth of vision and interpretive phraseology were apparent to all.

When the brilliant Tausig arrangement of C. M. von Weber's "Invitation to Dance" was heard, the feelings of those present found expression in a furor of applause, for such an audience always likes the music it knows.

And with only one exception,—the number "On a Sonnet of Petrarch,"—it knew them all. They were the pianist's own "Two Preludes," Chopin's most popular "Nocturne" and "Ballade," and a Liszt "Hungarian Rhapsody."

... AND THE PRELUDE

At the close an ovation was the natural corollary of such majestic work and nobody would go home until he had played again.

Four encore numbers followed in quick succession, not forgetting the inevitable "C sharp minor Prelude," which came third.

The others were: 1. "Troika" (Tschaikowsky), 2. "Humoresque" (Rachmaninoff), and 4, his own arrangement of the Russian "Hopak" by Moussorgsky.

During the playing of all of these, the proverbial pin might have been heard to drop. Truly when Rachmaninoff plays, the world listens.