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Pianist Is Magnificent In Concert

··hmaninoff's Brilliance Impresses Audience in Third of Kellogg Series at Bushnell

·rgei Rachmaninoff, celebrated ·nist, was presented in the third ·the Kellogg Sunday concerts at ·e Bushnell Memorial auditorium ·nday afternoon.

The program:

·Variations in G minor	Beethoven
·ne Sonatas	Scarlatti
·nata in B minor	Chopin
·eme	Scriabin
·ude	Scriabin
·irr Tale	Medtner
·herzo	Borodin
·ncarolle	Rubenstein
·ude	Rachmaninoff
·ude	Rachmaninoff
·ude Caprice	Dohnanyi

In this unsentimental day and ·ge, I suppose one no longer "weeps ·ith delight," but of all the recent ·ocal musical events which might have justified so Tennysonian a ·mode of expression, yesterday's con·cert by Rachmaninoff was that oc·casion. Last of the Titans, and ·loaded like Atlas under the world ·of music he has borne so long now, ·he afforded two hours of tremen·dous and superb playing.

And of course his playing is Ti·tanic—no other word so accurately ·implies his kind of genius. Techni·cally he is resplendent above other ·pianists not just because of the ·small-cyclonic way in which he can ·sweep the keyboard, or because of ·the incredible combination of ·strength and delicacy he attains at ·one time, or the magnificence of his ·chord colors or the flash of dynamic ·brilliance—not for these things ·alone, but because the breath and ·sweep and glitter of all this capacity ·impress you with being on a larger ·normal scale not only in general ·dimension but in power. However ·you might estimate Paderewski or ·Kreisler, you would not call their ·playing Titanic. Their greatness is ·better described by many other ·terms. Titanic is the word we reserve ·for Rachmaninoff.

Among the thousand-and-one ·aphoristic remarks made about art ·is one which says that art is beauty ·colored by the temperament of its ·momentary creator. It is one of the ·most apt descriptions of Rachman·inoff's art, for we have few musi·cians who give us performance and ·music so thoroughly tinted with ·their own neuroses. I hasten to state ·that I use "neuroses" positively in ·no derogatory sense, but to signify ·intense temperamental coloring and ·implication. The two kinds of beauty ·of art which fill his playing are ·the completely intellectualized beau·ty, carved out of ice or whirled out ·in icy spindrift, like the Scarlatti, ·the Dohnanyi, the Scriabin Etude ·of yesterday's concert, and the su·perb elegiac poetry of such emo·tional scores as the Chopin Sonata, ·his own Etude or the Rubinstein ·Barcarolle. In the first he is re·plendent and in the latter, un·matched.

Chopin Sonata Outstanding.

One need not say that he should ·never be allowed to play anything ·but these kinds of music, because ·he never does. They both lie too ·close to his own heart and his own ·temper. You can ascribe it to many ·causes, but this has been done often, ·and I think as far as he is peron·ally concerned, too painfully often ·before. There it is, and yesterday ·afforded complete corroboration. ·When he chose a Kreisler composi·tion for encore, was it "Liebes·freud?" It was "Liebeslied."

"The" performance of the after·noon was the Chopin Sonata, and ·you would look back into your ·musical memoirs a long way to find ·so utterly beautiful an exposition of ·it. So familiar and famous a work in ·itself needs no comment—its won·derfully poignant and melancholic ·persuasion is too well known. But ·such handsome outlining of themes ·and melodies, such uncommonly ·penetrating statement of both the ·music and the meaning of inner ·and lower voices, and such com·pletely moving re-creation of the ·slow sections are seldom, very sel·dom heard. Chopin's voice has sel·dom cried out so heroically or so la·mentingly as it did through Rach·maninoff yesterday.

It is now becoming the fashion ·among museums to exhibit one great ·painting at a time. Should this be·come carried over into music, I ·should like to hear Rachmaninoff ·play this sonata, and nothing else, ·twice in one afternoon, with half ·an hour between for sort of "soak·ing" in it.

Beethoven Variations.

Out of the first Beethoven, the ·pianist wrung a lot of brilliant music ·and equally scintillating playing. ·This is one of the few sets of vari·ations of which one cannot say "The ·more it changes, the more it is the ·same thing." It was both compelling ·and exciting. Scarlatti, that "devil ·of the keyboard," would have been ·highly gratified to have heard his ·two sonatas so deftly set forth, with ·such precise clarity, so Attic a pas·torale and so fleeting a capriccio.

Among the shorter pieces, the ·Scriabin Poeme and especially his ·own Etude were thoroughly elegant, ·the latter especially engaging for ·the beautifully chorded opening and ·the subsequently contrasting bass ·and treble. The Dohnanyi Etude was ·simply ripped off for glitter of speed. ·His own arrangement of the liebes·lied was simply a delight.

The handling of many of the ·scores was of course highly indi·vidualistic. The sharp delineation of ·themes was present as always, often ·in unexpected places, as in the ·Scriabin Poeme. The freedom of ·tempi, the adaptation of rhythms, ·the distribution of dynamic empha·sis was purely Rachmaninoff. Some ·found it objectionable that the ·Beethoven closed so apart from the ·usual interpretation. Others would ·have preferred a larger tone and ·strength in the opening of Chopin. ·But these differences are in the last ·analysis rather largely of opin·ion. The concert as a whole was so ·very grand, the dimension and ·power so exciting, that details disap·peared in the face of it.

T. H. P.

Glasgow, Scotland, is warring on

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