

RACHMANINOFF DISCUSSES RUSSIAN MUSIC, COMPOSERS

Pianist Declares America Is Better Than Europe Now for a Musician—He Will Settle Here

BY O. B. KEHLER
Sergei Rachmaninoff, Russian pianist and composer, got up early Wednesday morning and went away and left his private car, "Chicago," in the terminal station and stayed away a couple of hours and came back and found the Chicago right where he had left it, blanked by switch engine, which appeared to be practicing.

Whereupon Mr. Rachmaninoff shrugged his shoulders expressively.

"They said they were going to move it somewhere else," he said. "And here it is still, only it is not at all still. It is very noisy indeed."

Then we went inside the "Chicago" and sat down and Mr. Rachmaninoff lighted another cigarette. Mr. Rachmaninoff would be a hard problem for the anti-rhythmists. He is a most successful gentleman in a most demanding profession. The brains under his closely cropped hair function easily and with effect. And cigarettes do not appear to have stunted his growth. He is about six feet two inches tall, broad-shouldered, lanky and powerful. And when he so desires he can take a grand piano up and tuck it under his chin and play it like a violin.

Statement Not Literal
This last statement is not intended literally. Mr. Rachmaninoff's pianistic powers are impressive enough to warrant the idea that he could do it if he chose. Wait until you hear him take hold of that old Steinway tonight at the auditorium, when he gets to the Liszt "Tarentella" that concludes his concert program. Then you'll know what I mean.

Mr. Rachmaninoff says he likes to play Liszt's compositions. Liszt was a pianist, too; a diabolically skilled one. If traditions may be trusted, He wrote what is said to be the hardest composition there is, the "Don Juan Fantasy." Mr. Rachmaninoff plays that—of course. For exercise, sometimes in concerts. He plays pretty much everything. And composes. I asked him several questions. One was about cigarettes. I had been told the Russian cigarettes were the best-blended in the world.

"I don't know about that," he replied. "I smoke them. Sometimes I have difficulty getting them. They were the kind with a tube attached, supposed to be designed for the use of bowhiskered Russians, keeping the cigarette proper out of the foliage. Mr. Rachmaninoff is not bowhiskered. He uses an amber holder; not one of these long ones. He smokes a good deal. I should judge."

Russian Music Popular
Mr. Rachmaninoff said he fancied Russian music was gaining in popularity in this country, which is now his country by adoption. "Well, like it here," he said simply. "My oldest daughter is at Columbia university. My other daughter is in a private school. I think I shall stay in this country. I shall go to England for some concerts later in the year—and I promise you I shall be glad to get back. As to poor Russia—there is nothing for music there now; and not much in the rest of Europe."

I asked him about the great Russian composer, Tchaikowsky, being surprised and gratified to find that we pronounced his name practically the same way.

Yes, he had known the great Tchaikowsky when he, Rachmaninoff, was a young lad. "He helped me very greatly. He helped me to produce my first opera, 'Aleko.' I was twenty then; a young man; and it was near the time of his death. He was about composing his swan-song, the 'Symphony Pathétique,' the greatest of all symphonies. It was his last. He made a joke about us two. He said: 'Two great Russian composers are now about to produce new works. Tchaikowsky goes to Petrograd to produce his new symphony. Rachmaninoff goes to Moscow to produce his new opera.'"

Master's Prize
He called it a "joke," but his eyes lighted up at the recollection of this implied praise by the great master, and I recalled hearing that Tchaikowsky had said to young Rachmaninoff that he was destined to be the leader in Russian music. I asked Mr. Rachmaninoff about that, but he shook his head and smiled.

"I hear it now for the first time," he said. "I asked Mr. Rachmaninoff how he composed music—if he used the piano in working it out or wrote it unaided by ear, as Rossini used to write his operas—usually lying in bed lazily."

Either way, it seemed, Mr. Rachmaninoff liked using the piano as he composed, however. Still, it was not essential. One could take up a musical score for the first time, you know, and look at it, and know just how it would sound.

That is, Mr. Rachmaninoff could. This is and always will be a mystery to me—how a person can merely look at a score and hear it within his brain. Yet Beethoven composed some great stuff after he was stone deaf. But how can they do it?

The Russian pianist laughed. "Surely one could not compose, if he could not do that," he said, in an explanation which did not explain much.

Declines to Play
"There is a piano in the 'Chicago' and I wanted Mr. Rachmaninoff to play. He had said he practiced an hour or two a day."

"Oh, no, no," he objected, laughing. "An upright piano, to play on?"

Never! To practice on—yes. It will do for practice, for the fingers. But not the ears!"

I looked at his hands. A great pianist's hands always are interesting. Invariably they are powerful; they have to be. Under a soft, white skin they are as steady as those of a professional golfer, which are the steadiest hands I know about. Mr. Rachmaninoff's hands are rather large, with not such long fingers; compactly constructed; very white; firm as ivory. I suggested that he must have prodigious power in them. He laughed again, deprecatingly, and shrugged his shoulders.

"Oh, I don't know about that," he said. "But remember what I said about it when he gets to the Tarentella Wednesday night at the auditorium. And in his own famous 'Prelude.'"

This is Mr. Rachmaninoff's second concert here. It is to be one of the big musical events of the season. Indications Wednesday were for an even larger audience than heard him the first time.

SOLDIER'S AFFIDAVIT DECLARES SERGEANT KILLED A PRIVATE

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keep the hanging at daylight secret. Mr. Pyffe said, "the news got around by noon."

"I never heard of a lynching and I certainly would have heard of it had it occurred," he added.

Captain Denies Charge

Captain Joseph D. Hahn, now at Camp Benning, Ga., who was stationed at Gieves from March, 1918, to July 29, 1919, said he heard of no illegal executions at that point. During his service there he only knew of the one legal hanging.

"A witness, Harry W. Segal, of Dorchester, Mass., has testified that he saw you and others take two negro soldiers out and execute them."

Captain Hahn was informed, "is that true?" he was asked.

"It is absolutely untrue," said Captain Hahn, adding that he could not recall Segal or any incident which might have caused him to make such a statement.

The provost officer at Gieves, Oscar F. Cole, of Berlin, N. H., who was stationed there from April, 1918, to June, 1919, testified he never heard of the alleged lynching of the negro there.

"I don't believe it could have happened without my knowledge," Cole declared.

Luther Churchill, of East Bridgewater, Mass., testified he never heard of the hanging of a soldier in the Sixteenth infantry in December, 1917. As recording officer at the regimental hospital Churchill said he was positive no body of a soldier with rope marks around the neck was sent there.

As senior soldier attached to the hospital service of the Sixteenth infantry, Sergeant William T. Hanlon, of Fort Benjamin Harrison, Ind., corroborated the testimony of Churchill as to absence of rope marks.

"No such body was ever sent to any of the station hospitals under my care," Hanlon said.

Marvin J. Menlove, of Lurray, Va., declared he was with Major Hierome Opie, of Staunton, Va., commander of the Third battalion, One Hundred and Sixteenth infantry, in the Argonne, and never heard of charges in France that the major had shot any of his men.

The hearing was adjourned until tomorrow.

DEMOCRATS TO ASK FURTHER HEARING BEFORE FINAL VOTE

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ment that further delay might change the situation.

Meanwhile a little group of uncertain Republicans continued efforts to agree on a "sink-or-swim-together" program. After many conferences, continuing all through yesterday and far into the night, the uncertain or doubtful senators had not agreed on concerted action. There remained a possibility that they might force Republican leaders to agree to send the case back to committee for further questioning of Newberry.

The doubtful group held the balance of power. If its members united in demanding further evidence, Republican chiefs would have to yield, for the doubtful votes are enough to unseat Newberry.

This is one of the questions expected to be cleared up today. The whole case may be disposed of late in the day, although the senate usually consumes more time in the home stretch than anywhere else. A dozen speeches were in prospect as the senate met at 11 a. m.

Tennille Home Burned

TENNILLE, Ga., Jan. 11.—Fire of unknown origin completely destroyed the home occupied by G. H. Moore, employe of the Georgia and Florida railroad, Sunday night at 7 o'clock. The family had been away for several days and Mr. Moore came in off his run while the house was in full blaze. All the contents were totally lost with but little insurance.

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