

**Just said**

**R**ACHMANNOFF at the Board of Trade hall Monday night. I had previously listened to much of his music, had read stories of his life, had knowledge of the fact that he was a serious man and a world-famed genius, noted for his aloofness and simplicity of manners. But I never witnessed more the power of a single man to sway the multitude. I suppose I felt as did others that I was in the presence of one of those few rare, God-endowed men, who have been put into the world to perform a great work.

Rachmannoff looked sad. He was always serious, but he feels for his country today. His personal life, a great estate of 3,000 acres employing 200 peasants, is nothing to him compared to the suffering of many of his compatriots. Today, with his family, he lives in New York. No one knows that he will ever return to that land to which the musical world owes so much.

Rachmannoff is now 46 years of age. He was born on the 28th of March, 1873, on the estate of his mother, called "Onygi" in the province of Novgorod; that is to say, in the heart of the real Russia, where he spent his childhood, until he reached the ninth year.

The son of rich parents, belonging to the stock of the old Russian nobility, Rachmannoff was at first destined to enter into the most aristocratic school of Russia. But his decided interest, to Anna Ornstein, a pupil of the Petrograd conservatory, being the honor of having been the first teacher of the boy Rachmannoff, she was so successful in her efforts that when he, at the age of 9 years, entered the Petrograd conservatory he immediately drew upon him universal attention, and became at once the pride and hope of that institution. However, he was never a child prodigy.

During the season of 1883-84, Nizkiy recommended his cousin to Liszt, who consented to accept young Rachmannoff among his pupils from the beginning of the autumn of 1885. This plan, however, came to naught, since Liszt died during the summer of that year, and Rachmannoff went on with his studies with Zveriev.

The young composer now devoted himself passionately to composition. During the summer of 1892, in the quiet seclusion of country life, he finished many compositions.

In the fall of 1893, Rachmannoff received a very auspicious engagement to conduct his opera, *Aleksa in Kiev*, when unexpectedly on the 25th of October the tragically sudden death of P. I. Tchaikovsky occurred. This was a heavy blow for all musical Russia, and especially to our young composer, for Tchaikovsky represented to him not only the national pride and ideal, but was personally dear and near to him. Ever since young Rachmannoff's arrival in Moscow, Tchaikovsky had been exceedingly interested in the boy's growing talent and had followed his development with ardent sympathy.

Under the immediate impression of the heavy bereavement—both artistic and personal—through the death of Tchaikovsky, Rachmannoff composed his *Trio Elegiac*, which was successfully performed in January, 1894.

He next appeared as pianist in concerts, or, still more often, he conducted orchestral concerts, an activity for which he also appeared to be singularly fitted. Rachmannoff found here the important chance to become closely acquainted with the small group of highly talented artists of different types, whom Mamontoff used to assemble around him, especially with Th. I. Shalghin, who at the time was only beginning his career.

Rachmannoff, who, of course, as a musician was incomparably superior to Shalghin, because so much interested and charmed by the brilliant dazzling talent of the young singer, that he gave freely of his time and interest in order to further Shalghin's musical development.

After finishing his operatic season with Mamontoff, Rachmannoff went to London (1897), where he appeared successfully in all his capacities: as pianist, composer and conductor performing his orchestral phantom, *The Rock*.

In 1898, Rachmannoff took up his residence in Dresden, devoting most of his time to pianistic concert activities, in which domain he gradually attained a world-wide reputation.

In the same time Rachmannoff made many European appearances as a composer. Especially should be mentioned a performance in Paris, of his *Springtime*—a cantata, with Shalghin as soloist, under the leadership of Chevillard in 1898.

Rachmannoff made several concert tours in the following years. In 1899 he visited the United States, in 1911 Holland, and in the beginning of 1914 he made a general tour through Europe. Between times Rachmannoff was conductor of the Moscow Symphony concerts in 1912-1913.

When the war started, Rachmannoff made a prolonged tour through all Russia, giving concerts for the wounded soldiers and victims of the war. In 1917 he undertook another concert tour through Russia, but this time for another reason, the untimely death of his intimate friend Scriabin, impelled, Rachmannoff thus to honor his memory by performing and spreading the knowledge of his work all over Russia.

The medical evils, which happened in Russia in 1917, forced the composer to leave his native land in December, 1917, and take up his residence in the Romainian countries.

As a real Russian and a great-hearted man, Rachmannoff feels deeply the woe and misfortune that have befallen his homeland. But if there is sadness in his calls during these times of stress, there is also a hopeful side to it. Rachmannoff is at the present moment one of the first—if not the very first—representatives of Russian musical art, and owing to the particularly rich organization of his talent, its ambience within him all the possibilities of musical pianification as an original composer, as a virtuoso of the first rank, and as a remarkable conductor.

Endowed as he is by the force of circumstance from Russia, where he had reached his highest artistic development, Rachmannoff must be considered at the present moment as a potentially almost incomparable extraordinary from Russian musical art to the civilized world, with a mission to remind the world what it owes to Russia and at present, unhappy Russia! He is the veritable high priest of Russian musical art.

To all that has been said about the quality of Rachmannoff as a composer, he is also the prototype of the conscientious artist who puts the highest demands upon himself, and he is able to combine the deep concentration of his creative thought with the lithe, delicate and the striking touch of the most minute detail work.

*The Wanderer*