

Rachmaninoff in wonderful piano concert

No musical pleasure that the season has offered thus far has eclipsed the delight of the recital last evening in Elmwood Music hall by Sergel Rachmaninoff, pianist, this being the second concert in the Ellis series, under the local management of Bessie Bellanca, Louise Michael and Genevieve C. Kraft. It was an occasion of unalloyed enjoyment. The vast audience fell at once under the spell of this wizard of the enchantments of sound, this peer of the realm of beautiful tone, the greatest Russian of them all.

Rachmaninoff possesses all that goes to the making of a great musical artist. He has poetry, intellect, virtuosity, sanity of conception and individuality, the last named quality being that which makes him pre-eminent among his confreres. He takes a familiar composition and makes it like a new creation by his treatment. This was especially noticeable in the Chopin group, which comprised the A flat Ballade, Nocturne in D flat, the so-called Minute waltz, and the C sharp minor Scherzo, with the G flat waltz as encore. He held his listeners spellbound by the ineffable loveliness of his tone in the Ballade; he obtained charming and unusual effects by his accentuation of the grace notes in the D flat waltz, and his utterance of the rich and virile chords of the Scherzo, with the gossamer harmonies floating above, was unforgettable.

Ballade No. 2, by Liszt, was the opening number of the unhackneyed programme. One can understand its infrequent use by artists, for not even the interpretation of a Rachmaninoff could make it interesting. Of another complexion was the G minor Ballade of Grieg, the beauty of which was enhanced by the pianist's exquisite delivery of its measures. The Turkish rondo from the A major sonata, by Mozart, was an ensuing encore of captivating delicacy and charm.

Two Rachmaninoff pieces, an Elegie and a sparkling polka, were novelties. A Capriccio, opus 28, by Dohnanyi, was a delightful bit of musical writing, modern, but not too much so, scintillating and dainty. A Rachmaninoff transcription of Kreisler's Liebeslied was again a keen musical pleasure, both in the cleverness of its construction and the charm of its performance. Liszt's Tarentelle from the Venezia e Napoli suite brought the official programme to a dazzling close, but the pianist was not permitted to withdraw until he had granted the inevitable C sharp minor prelude, without which his audiences are never quite satisfied.

Mr. Rachmaninoff rarely indulges in eccentricities, musical or otherwise. All the more curious, therefore, was the impulse which led him to interpolate an original measure in the Chopin G flat waltz. But it was very pretty, so he may be forgiven.

M. M. H.