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FINE PERFORMANCE OF RACHMANINOFF IN MURAT RECITAL

Russian Pianist Thrills Large Audience in Classic and Romantic Program.

BY BERTRAM TAYLOR.

Rachmaninoff's recital, given at the Murat yesterday afternoon under the direction of the Ona B Talbot Fine Arts Association, was another manifestation of those great intellectual powers which so distinguish and set apart this artist. By this time everybody knows that a Rachmaninoff recital is no occasion for those who like sentiment served in a pile on a platter He is, of course, preeminent among virtuosos, but the real height of him rises above this, above the seductions of beautiful pianism to some philosophy of life and music that seems peculiarly his own.

And like all thinkers he is a strong individualist, so honest and so secure that he takes liberties that are not permitted to the lesser ones. He literally recreates, and if in the process Rachmaninoff impinges on Chopin or Liszt it is so much the better. The composer loses nothing in the process and the audience gains immeasurably For instance, in the Chopin valse in A flat Rachmaninoff put in several little touches that stamped it as his own, like a signature attached to a painting—a valuable signature.

In the same measure that he never seems to draw on a prodigious and unexplored reserve of thought and power of his own, so he never forces the piano to yield its all There is some subtlety in this, for the piano is not an instrument capable of many secrets, except under an inspired touch This touch and this power in restraint make Rachmaninoff's playing a joy that does not wear off with repetition

Conservative Program.

If repetition could effect any such disastrous thing it would have made itself felt yesterday afternoon, for a program could hardly be more committed to conservative and much played pieces than this one. Even with the changes made from the original announcement it read like a musical guide book. But any one who reckoned on getting no more thrills than might be found in a Baedecker description of Venice reckoned without Rachmaninoff He actually took his audience on far journeys of indescribable beauty

Compositions that are more than usually familiar serve one great purpose. They show up with greater and more blinding illumination the virtuosity of the player, and not only his physical attainments, but even more the curve of his thought and feeling. To do such things as Rachmaninoff did with the Chopin A flat ballade, the A flat waltze, the D flat nocturne and the Scherzo is to achieve a modern miracle. It was like restoring the dead to life

Part of the pleasure to be had from hearing his Chopin is the occasional and considered use of a very dry tone. Rachmaninoff etches phrases and passages sometimes with a very sharp outline, only to make the more valuable and impressive his broad brush strokes and use of tonal color With Chopin, who has been too much subject to splashing this manner is particularly refreshing.

The Handel "Aria con Variazioni" like Rachmaninoff's Mozart of other occasions was a marvel of discreet and pure interpretation All the delicacy of outline and content of a classical masterpiece was there shaped by a round, soft bell-like tone. The Beethoven Pathetique sonata was similarly expressed, with a nice and intricate distribution of light and shadow Remembering how wooden and heavy some of the transition passages in the first movement can be made to sound it was with the greater gratitude and admiration that the ear received this artist's wise and sophisticated reading.

Brilliant Playing.

Tausig's arrangement of the Weber "Invitation to the Dance" was a dazzling display of virtuosity, one of those marvellous war-horses that can not be killed or even crippled In none of the pieces did Rachmaninoff's superb rhythm make itself felt as in this elaborately embroidered composition—not only the correct beats felt through the phrases but even more the large undulations on which the whole thing moves.

The two Rachmaninoff compositions substituted for the preludes originally announced were interesting, though not typical of his best work The first, "Daisies," was a piano arrangement of a song, the second, a polka, had the prettiness and elegance of a salon piece and might be supposed to have stemmed from Moskowski

There was also Rachmaninoff's arrangement of a minuet by Liszt and the second Hungarian rhapsody with a cadenza interpolated by the performer. It was a most amusing affair, this cadenza, brilliant but not of the tinkling variety. It took up an emphatic theme thoroughly hammered out in its original shape, and carried it through various harmonic changes There was something sardonically humorous in the idea and the way it was expressed which changed to some extent the whole character of the piece, like a searching gaze turned upon a platitude

Being in a mood to give his hearers full value in return for a more than ordinarily enthusiastic reception the pianist added five extras, one a movement from a Mozart sonata, a Chopin waltz; an etude by Dohnanyi; a charming arrangement of his own of Kreisler's "Liebesleid" and, of course, the C sharp minor prelude

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