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NEW WORLD SEEN BY RACHMANINOFF

Vision of Great Player Transcends That of Ordinary Mortals

RECORD AUDIENCE

Many Unable to Gain Admission to Hear Giant Pianist

Robin H. Legge, critic of the London Daily Telegraph, writing recently about Nikisch, and that the great conductor was the author of many beautiful compositions which he destroyed, gives as the reason for this destruction: "No man can serve two masters; I am a conductor!" And Mr. Legge added: "He was pianist right. Every day we see this one famous pianist or that turning away from his true musical god to follow his strange idol; but never yet in contemporary history have we found a musician truly and historically great in one respect whose talent has not deteriorated on its being diluted. I suggest Paderewski, D'Albert, Busoni for a start. Indisputably Nikisch was first—no man can serve two masters."

If anyone were to repeat this to Rachmaninoff, he might answer, with perfect truth and modesty: "But it can be done, and I am doing it." Yet that would not disprove the generality of Mr. Legge's contention, for Mr. Rachmaninoff furnishes such gigantic exception to the rule of piano playing as most people knew them, indeed, such a living personification of the exceptional in music, that ordinary ideal must be revised, or at least rearranged, in any serious attempt to analyse what he does.

PLAYED NEW MUSIC.

The recital Mr. Rachmaninoff gave yesterday afternoon in His Majesty's Theatre was the fourth he has given in Montreal. As on his first appearance here, so again yesterday, the theatre was sold out, with a large number of persons on the stage and many turned away, unable to gain admission. It was, for all concerned, a happy occasion, with the master in an expansive and communicative mood, and a responsive audience that responded eagerly to whatever he had to say.

No phase of our concert life is more indicative of progress and a growing interest in music, as music and disassociated from any particular performer, than the attention given to programs. The stir and excitement over what the New York Philharmonic Orchestra would play last spring was proof of this; and yesterday two pieces by Medtner were included in Mr. Rachmaninoff's scheme because an admirer of Medtner's wrote and asked for them. But alas! Perhaps to console persons to whom Medtner is only a name, if it chance that they have heard, or read, of him at all; or possibly in a spirit of banter, as if to say "Well! I'll give you Medtner, but you'll have to pay for him!" Mr. Rachmaninoff also put down two of the most stop-worn Chopin pieces, the A flat Ballade and the Waltz, "sur petit chien" in D flat, and goodhumoredly satisfied the hankering of many fans for the Prelude in C sharp minor. Of course, every musician must have been glad of the Medtner music; but, engrossing as this proved to be, the question arises: Were the Medtner numbers worth this sacrifice? I doubt it.

SPIRITUAL ART.

"Music is a spiritual art," Mr. Rachmaninoff is quoted as saying, and it is assuredly as a spiritual art that he practises it. Some players make us forget technique; Rachmaninoff lets us see through it and shows us the master mind that completes its concept of a thing before letting that concept take audible shape and substance. It is because of this moulding of physical force and control to serve the purpose of his will that Mr. Rachmaninoff is able to rearrange the ideas in a composition, to present them to a new light, without robbing them of any of their original character. He is like a daring theatrical producer who quets familiar scenes, designs new backgrounds, adapts written or traditional directions to suit his plan, and orders fresh groupings of the dramatis personae.

For this reason, the inexperienced student needs to be made aware of the well-nigh immeasurable distance that must be travelled before Rachmaninoff's admirable, so far as interpretation is concerned, can safely be imitated. For the tyro to attempt to play the Chopin Ballade as Mr. Rachmaninoff played it yesterday would be fatal and result in a feeble exaggeration of tempo and expression. Only those who have climbed to the height where Mr. Rachmaninoff stands, and their genius is not legion, can venture to take the liberties he allows himself. All, however, can plant their feet in the path that he has trod. With such brilliant genius, remembering that he has said, "Technique is not a gift of the gods, but the result of hard work, long years of unceasing study."

THE PROGRAM.

The program was: Ballade, No. 2, Liszt. Ballade, Op. 24, Grieg. Esquisses, Harmonieuse Blacksmith-Handel. Ballade, A flat; Nocturne, E flat, Op. 27, No. 2; Waltz, D flat; Scherzo, B minor; Chopin. Recorda, Cobaltz, (posthumous) Chopin. Two Fairy Stories, Op. 20 and 24, Medtner. Danse-Tzigane; Daisies, Op. 38 (transcription); Prelude in B flat; Rachmaninoff. Tarantelle, Liszt. Esquisses, Troika en traineaux, Tschaikowsky; Prelude, C sharp minor, Rachmaninoff.

It was essentially a picturesque, pictorial program, not a philosophical or heart-searching one, a collection of music of largely exhibitory character, and music that seemed to have been the expression of something the listener had vaguely felt himself. It has been said of Whistler's portrait of his mother that every man sees in it a likeness to his own mother; and a sonata by Beethoven, a choral prelude by Bach, a chorus by Cesar Franck will often have the effect of being but an amplification of something already sensed or dimly apprehended. Rachmaninoff, on the other hand, lifted the curtain on an absolutely new world and showed us things that were totally strange and foreign to one's average experience. With all his quietness, he is one of the most disturbing players the ay instrument to visit us in years. Sleepness he will not let us remain contented, where we were resting, but makes us be up and moving; and this he does aggressively, with noise or waving of banners, but simply because the natural, normal action of his mind is so strong and vigorous to be resisted.

CONQUERS PIANO.

Where is the pianist who stands ascendant over the piano as Rachmaninoff does? He has got so far beyond ordinary technique that technique is to him a very little thing, and the piano itself but an incident in his work. For the printed notes, strive and strive. But with all his business, Mr. Rachmaninoff has the infinite capacity for genius for taking pains, so without the delicacy of his touch when delicacy is required, the ears he will assay upon an inconspicuous phrase in an inner voice, and his pleasure in holding up a little run that is like a string of perfect pearls.

Mr. Rachmaninoff's first teacher, when he began to study the piano at five years of age, was a woman. Is this the reason that, while he is the most masculine of pianists he also has attributes that commonly are found only in the refinement of a feminine nature? It would be interesting to know.

F. K.

Social and

The Badminton Tournament.

The Badminton Tournament under the auspices of the C.A.M.C. Badminton Club commences on Thursday of this week continuing until Saturday. The first match will be played on Thursday afternoon, at half-past two o'clock, at the Army Medical Corps Armory, Stanley street, and the match will be played for the Toronto Garrison Cup, won last year by a combined team of the Ladies Montreal Tennis and Badminton Club and the C. A. M. C. Badminton Club. Tea will be afterwards served. On Friday and Saturday there will be matches all day at the Drill street Armory, luncheon will be served to the players and there will be afternoon tea. Among the players from out-of-town who are expected for the tournament are Miss Boone, Miss Helen Scott, Miss Joyce Hutton, Miss M. Kinsley, Mrs. J. L. Gosselin, Mr. and Mrs. H. H. Buchanan, Lieut.-Col. Rook, Mr. J. de M. Kennedy, Mr. A. Murray Garden, Mr. R. P. Northcote and Col. G. G. Blackstock, all of Toronto, who are to stay at the Ritz-Carlton; Miss Ewart and Col. and Mrs. Snell, of Ottawa; Prof. and Mrs. P. G. Campbell and Major and Mrs. Lafferty, of Kingston; Mrs. Hausenebaly and Miss Brunet, of Quebec; Mr. and Mrs. Charles Grant and Col. Almond, of Halifax. London, Ont. will also be represented.

Band of Mercy Fair.

At the Band of Mercy Fair in the Ritz Carlton on Friday afternoon, the fancy work table will be in charge of Mrs. Hope Scott and Miss Mildred Hagar, assisted by Mrs. Lyman Dwight, and the Misses Kathleen Gear, Edith Sinuter, Joanne Baby, Dora Bishop and Bell Taylor. Among the attractive features at this table will be some charming chints aprons and crepe de chine lingerie. The convenors of the housekeepers table where all kinds of home-made "goodies" will be sold, are Mrs. Malcolm Barclay and Miss Helen Bernard. They will be assisted by Mrs. F. W. Stewart, Mrs. Whitley, Mrs. W. Peck, Miss W. Sims, Miss Hinklock, Miss McNicoll, Miss May Riley and Miss M. Smyth.

Engagements Announced.

Mrs. C. A. Whitmore, of Toronto, announces the engagement of her daughter, Lelia Louise Auger, to Mr. H. M. Thomas of Montreal, younger son of Mrs. Neva Thomas. Los Angeles, California, the marriage to take place quietly the middle of March.

Mr. and Mrs. R. A. Brock, of Montreal West, announce the engagement of their daughter, Violet Fanny, to Mr. H. Reginald B. Armstrong, son of Mr. and Mrs. J. H. Armstrong, of Westmount. The marriage is to take place in April.

Social and Personal.

The Hon. Nathaniel and Mrs. Curry who have been spending the winter in Bermuda, returned to town on Saturday. Mrs. Curry and Mrs. Victor Curry are sailing by the Montcalm on March 10, to spend two months in England and France.

The following Montrealers spent the week-end at the Manitou Club, Lake Manitau, Mr. and Mrs. Kenneth Ross, Mr. and Mrs. Stanley B. Corbitine, Mr. and Mrs. George Henderson, Mr. and Mrs. Victor Bury, Mr. and Mrs. C. P. Sise, Mr. and Mrs. P. F. Sise, Mrs. Whitehead and Mr. and Mrs. M. L. Maltber.

Mrs. Allen Boswell, of Quebec, is visiting her sister, Mrs. A. Usher Jones. Mrs. F. S. Maghee and Mrs. T. C. McG. Stoker entertained at luncheon last week in honor of Mrs. Boswell and tomorrow Miss Frances Caverhill is giving a small tea for her.

Mr. and Mrs. Llewellyn Crenyn have returned from their wedding trip to New York and Atlantic City, and are residing at 11 Vendome avenue, Notre Dame de Grace. Mrs. Crenyn was formerly Miss Beatrice Seaborn, of London, Ont.

Among other Montrealers who are going to Ottawa this week for the opening of Parliament are Senator A. A. Thibaudeau, Miss Madeleine Thibaudeau, Senator and Mrs. J. M. Wilson and the Misses Wilson, and Miss Anne D'Halewyn.

Mrs. W. H. Drummond will be the speaker tomorrow afternoon at the meeting of the Catholic Women's League, in the Prince of Wales Salon of the Windsor Hotel. Her subject will be "The Eighth Art."

Mrs. E. J. Chambers and Miss Bertha Chambers have gone gone to Ottawa for the opening of Parliament. They will remain there until May when they open their summer home at Vaudreuil.

Mr. George Beardmore, M.P.H., of Toronto, who has been spending a week in town the guest of Mr. and Mrs. F. N. Beardmore, of Pine avenue west, returned home last night.

Miss Ewart of Ottawa, who is coming to town to take part in the Badminton tournament will be the guest of Mrs. F. M. Stevens, Durocher street, during her stay in this city.

Miss Olive LeHurray, has gone to Sherbrooke to be near her nephew, Robert LeHurray, who recently underwent an operation and is still in the Sherbrooke Hospital.

Miss Grace Brown and Miss Olive Ferguson are sailing on Friday from St. John, N.B. by the Montcalm, to spend four months travelling in England, France and Italy.

Mrs. T. Howard Stewart who has been spending some time in Sherbrooke with her daughter, Mrs. MacDonald, at the Magog House, returned home on Friday.

The C. A. M. C. Badminton Club are entertaining at a dance at the Hunt Club on Saturday night, in honor of the visiting Badminton players.

Mr. and Mrs. Pierre Cagnain are going to Ottawa on Wednesday to attend the opening of Parliament. They will stay at the Chateau Laurier.

Col. and Mrs. Hanford McKee are entertaining at a luncheon on Thursday at the University Club in honor of the Toronto Badminton players.

Miss Audrey Buchanan is sailing by the Montcalm on Friday to spend about four months abroad.

Mrs. R. E. Welch, Lorne avenue, has left for Scotland to spend a few months with her sister.

Mr. and Mrs. Robert Mantell arrived in town this morning and are guests at the Ritz-Carlton.

Mr. and Mrs. Denniston Breakey, of Breakeyville, Que., are guests at the Ritz-Carlton.

Mrs. Frank Bond, Bishop street, returned yesterday from a visit to New York.

Mrs. Lloyd McKee of Sherbrooke, Que., is in town visiting her parents.

Miss Winifred Tait spent the week-end in Ottawa.

Mr. and Mrs. Russell Bell, Miss Mona Prentice, Mr. and Mrs. Austin Ekers and Mr. and Mrs. J. O. Hast-

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