

COMPOSER PLAYS POPULAR PIECES

Rachmaninoff's Program
Apparently Designed to
Please Greatest Number

PERFECT PIANISM

High Ideals Clearly Com-
municated to Audience—
Great Brilliance

In making a distinctly popular program for his piano recital in the St. Denis Theatre last night, Mr. Rachmaninoff may have thought that among some 2,000 or more music lovers the percentage of people who would want to hear something new would be small. If this was his reasoning, he was, of course, indisputably right. There are, broadcast throughout the land, thousands of music devotees who have not yet become so familiar with the best-known sonatas of Beethoven or the nocturnes of Chopin that they would prefer something more modern; and these people have exactly as much right to be considered as the more advanced students who sometimes forget, in their personal enthusiasm over the latest developments in composition, that they too, once upon a time, were thrilled by music that now they have outgrown.

The middle way for a concert giver is hard to find; and the high-minded performer who would "stoop down a little in order to lift people up," as Isolde Menges aptly phrased it, occasionally makes the mistake of stooping too far and consequently does not succeed in standing upright again. Mr. Rachmaninoff may, perhaps, have erred on the side of popularity in arranging his program for last night, but certainly he lifted it up to the highest level on which a performance can rest. There is no other pianist whose playing has both the breadth and intimacy of Mr. Rachmaninoff's. The gift of communication is his to a phenomenal degree.

MUSIC BY MEDTNER.

For the modernist there was, at the very beginning of the evening, the Improvization, Op. 31, of Nicolai Medtner, a compatriot (born in Moscow of German parents) for whom Mr. Rachmaninoff has expressed great esteem. This music, immensely attractive in its melodic grace and not too complicated in its harmonic structure to be easily followed, he played con amore.

Next there came the Appassionata Sonata of Beethoven, read in the strongly individual manner that is characteristic of Mr. Rachmaninoff, who let his original ideas concerning it have full play. His deliberation in the first movement did not seem to arise from any wish to be different from other pianists,—though different from all other pianists, Mr. Rachmaninoff always is—but from a profounder understanding of the music that gave him the right to handle it with more freedom than it would be wise for the average concert player to claim. Strikingly original too, was his treatment of the decorative florid figure in the Andante, which rippled with a Mozart-like happiness in clear

MUSIC

The McGill University faculty of music announces an orchestral concert to be given in the Royal Victoria College Hall next Thursday evening.

Jascha Heifetz, due here next Monday, gave a recital last Saturday in New York; and in reporting this, the World said: "A Heifetz recital, be it the first or the fifteenth of a season, means always the same thing: a crowd, a shouting, responsive crowd. Only the programs vary. What comes from the platform and what is returned by the audience are ever of the same calibre."

contrast to the deeper emotion of the melody that forms the body of the movement.

LIKE ROSENTHAL.

His Chopin numbers, Mr. Rachmaninoff played more in the style of Rosenthal than of Paderewski; that is, with a virility from which all trace of cloying sentiment was eliminated. Poetic feeling was there in plentiful measure, together with a singing tone of compelling appeal; but it was a sentiment that would not fade in the bright light of day. In the Funeral March of the Sonata, Mr. Rachmaninoff adopted Rubinstein's conception of the cortege approaching and receding; and by beginning the repetition of the first part fortissimo gave the trio the effect of a vocal interlude. Never have we heard the Funeral March played so healthily. In fact, but for the rhythm and the pace, it might scarcely have sounded like a funeral march at all. The sense of desolation that is anticipated came not at that point in the Sonata, but in the last movement; and there it was revealed with a master touch.

BLUE DANUBE WALTZ.

The inevitable pyrotechnic climax to a piano recital took the form of Schutz-Elver's paraphrase of "The Beautiful Blue Danube." Why, by the way, did Strauss give such an out-door name to such an in-door piece? The atmosphere last night was absolutely the atmosphere of the ball-room, a ball-room filled with a gay and be-jewelled company. This waltz was perfectly played, a maximum of brilliance being achieved with what seemed to be a minimum of effort; and, in the hands of a genius like Rachmaninoff, is infinitely preferable as a show piece to Liszt's vulgar distortion of music from "Don Giovanni" that Moiseiwitsch worried us with.

Other numbers were the F sharp major Nocturne and F major Waltz, Op. 34, No. 3, of Chopin; Mr. Rachmaninoff's own Melodie and Serenade: "La Jongleuse" by Moszkowski; and, for encores, Chopin's Waltz in D flat, the Rachmaninoff Prelude in G major and Prelude in C sharp minor.

The next famous visitor will be Heifetz, coming to the St. Denis on Monday evening, December 4.

PHILIP KING.

