

MUSIC AND THE DRAMA

Conducted by E. R. PARKHURST

RACHMANINOFF RECITAL.

The Russian Pianist Fascinates Three Thousand Hearers.

The famous Russian piano virtuoso Rachmaninoff, at his recital last night, was greeted by an inspiring audience of close upon three thousand people, every seat in Massey Hall being occupied. He was received with acclamation, and was enthusiastically recalled again and again during the evening.

The first number on the program was the "Improvisation, op. 31," by N. Medtner, a composer whose works have received a good deal of attention of late at concerts in New York. It is an ingenious and interesting study, abounding in ripples of pellucid tone, in which the pianist revelled. It was an effective preface to the succeeding Sonata, "Appassionata" of Beethoven, which had formed part of the programs of Paderewski and Hofmann. In the essential features of the music Rachmaninoff was in agreement with the readings of those two great masters, but from a dynamic point of view was more reserved in his emotionalism. His contrasts were not so tempestuous, although they were not wanting in power and vital significance. The theme of the slow movement was sung with a beautifully subdued charm and the brief variations on its theme were exquisitely traced.

The third program number was devoted to a group of Chopin pieces, a Nocturne, Valse and the grand Sonata, op. 35. In the smaller forms Rachmaninoff had his hearers lost in delight as his velvet-tipped fingers caressed the keys, coaxing from them lovely gradations of tone color. The Sonata was interpreted in a very sympathetic spirit and with an ease that banished the thought of technical difficulties. The Scherzo was more dainty than usual in its artifice. The Funeral March was pathetic in its appeal, without dragginess in its message, while the charming melody of the second theme was uttered without any intrusion of excess of sentiment. To the overpowering demand for an encore number Rachmaninoff responded with the Chopin Valse in D Flat, which was a marvel of fluent velocity and a revelation of equalized fingering.

The fourth group introduced two compositions of the player, "Melodie" and the "Serenade." These were, of course, rendered as they are intended to be rendered, for it may be taken for granted that the composer understood his own creations. Perhaps the "Serenade" was the more appreciated, but one has to remember that it is comparatively familiar.

Moszkowski's "La Jongleuse" was the fifth program contribution, and here again the audience were treated to a revelation of feathery execution, of capricious fantasy, of scintillating colors.

Finally, as an example of an extremely popular class of music, an

ingenious transcription of Strauss' "Blue Danube" waltz by Schulz-Evler, rounded up the program selections. It proved a taking trifle, of fantastic grace, and with a brilliant envelopment of the melodies.

The audience showed their sense of complete enjoyment in the recital by several demands for encores, which were not refused. The recital was over by a quarter past 10 o'clock, leaving an impression that it was all too brief.

HAMPDEN AS "MACBETH."

Tragedy Given Fine Production at Royal Alexandra Theatre.

By reason of an altogether happy combination of fine acting and fine management of stage mechanics, Walter Hampden's production of "Macbeth," which was last night's offering at the Royal Alexandra Theatre, is one of those rare theatrical treats that leave the student of Shakespeare, as well as the lover of the theatre for the theatre's sake, thoroughly satisfied. Too much praise cannot be given Mr. Hampden's art director, Claude Bragdon, for the noble background he has thrown up for the players and their spoken lines. In these days of extravagance in freak stage settings and lighting effects, which more often detract from the play and confuse the spectator, while endeavoring to create atmospheric moods, it is a satisfaction to find one so successful in striking the happy medium by which realism and suggestion are harmoniously mingled. There must be a real inspiration to the player to work amid such suggestive settings as those supplied by Mr. Bragdon.

Mr. Hampden's interpretation of "Macbeth" runs a well-modulated scale. He develops his scenes with broad, carefully calculated strokes, rather than with any attempt at subtle shading, which, while pleasing to the sensitiveness of the pedant, might weaken the structure of the piece as a whole. Of course Mr. Hampden's methods are not the methods of Mr. Sothorn, but, while the latter scintillates and sparkles and snaps, and gives the audience its full money's worth for every line, there is a truer note in the work of Mr. Hampden, who works for a bigger picture, letting the sleeky details—so dear to the heart of his brother actor—take care of themselves, which they undoubtedly do.

Mary Hall plays "Lady Macbeth," and gives the part a reading well marked by contrasts. She displays a fine feeling for light and shade, and, like Mr. Hampden, gets her effects by broad strokes. Her early scenes are marked by a fine sense of power, but she keeps her emotional moments well in hand. In the later scenes, notably the banquet scene, she brings great charm and dignity to her interpretation.

We feared at first Ernest Rowan as "Macduff" would prove a disappointment, but in his later scenes he developed a surprising amount of power, and his reading of the