

RARE TREAT GIVEN BY RACHMANINOFF

Master Pianist Plays Own Splendid Concerto in Joint Recital With Symphony.

Detroit music lovers have much to be thankful for, because Thanksgiving evening they enjoyed the rare privilege of hearing Sergei Rachmaninoff, pianist and composer, play his own Third Concerto for Piano and Orchestra in conjunction with the Detroit Symphony orchestra. It was a novel and stimulating program—stimulating in that new musical ideas were set forth and novel in that at least one of the numbers, Rachmaninoff's splendid concerto, was heard in Detroit for the first time.

The interest of the audience was plainly for Mr. Rachmaninoff, who has been heard in Detroit before and who has come to be regarded as one of the greatest living pianists. His concerto is a difficult piece of music, hard for the audience to grasp, hard for the pianist, hard for the director and hard for the orchestra. It is a big work, bigly conceived, and its interpretation last evening, with the master musician at the keyboard and Mr. Gabrilowitsch conducting, made it one of the outstanding events of the season. The concerto is a serious work, rich in musical ideas, elaborated with the skill of a master, not alone for the piano, but for the orchestra as well. With the composer at the piano the concerto takes on the character of a duet, with the piano not at all subordinated and never unduly prominent.

The concerto is distinctly Russian in character, introducing as it does many of the plaintive Slavish airs and chants which are typical of the music of that nation.

Seldom has a Detroit audience been more demonstrative than that of Thursday evening. At the close of Mr. Rachmaninoff's performance he was roundly applauded and recalled several times, not with hand-clapping alone, but with cheers.

The rest of the program was made up entirely of the works of Russian composers, opening with the prelude to "Chowantchina," by Moussorsky, a work of great beauty and dignity, distinctly Russian, but with an appeal to lovers of music of every character. Its interpretation last evening was a triumph for Mr. Gabrilowitsch and his men. Following this came the symphonic poem, "The Sirens," a work notable because of its sweet harmonies and haunting melodies.

A number which caught the popular fancy was the Rimsky-Korsakov Spanish Caprice, based on the Spanish dance. Several Russian composers have gone to the music of Spain for inspiration, but none with more success than Rimsky-Korsakov. His caprice is notable because of its striking contrasts, ranging from the most delicate airs to the most tempestuous themes for full orchestra, but all the time strongly suggestive of the fandango and the other native dances of sunny Spain.—R. E. M.