

RACHMANINOFF CONCI

PIANISTS, like poets, are born and not made, and of such many are called but few chosen. To be of the pianistic elect one must be chosen by the gods. The concert stage is crowded by finger experts who have attained the goal—they think—by patient and noteworthy application; too, they possess the faculty of analysis and premeditation, but it is to only the gifted few that the divine spark is given; that subtle something that we recognize but can't define, when their fingers touch the piano.

It may be human magnetism, a hypnotic spell cast over us or what not. We only know that the ineffable charm is there, and we lend ourselves willing captives.

All this was demonstrated at Masonic Hall Friday night when Rachmaninoff cast his spell over an audience that for enthusiastic approbation has seldom, if ever been duplicated within my memory of local happenings.

The playing of this supreme artist is almost indefinable, so varied is its dynamic shading and tonal nuance. One recognizes the fact that a creative musician is at the instrument, so thoroly analytic are his interpretations and so clothed with the glamour of creative art. His fingers seem at times steel-shod, and anon they caress the keys with the delicacy of the faintest zephyr.

He moulds his phrases with the contour of a Praxiteles, so evenescent and iridescent are they. Weber's "Rondo Brilliant," for instance, was played with a brilliancy that sparkled like the waters of a cascade.

Chopin Interpretation

The "Sonata" of Chopin was given

a dramatic, and poetic exposition that I have never heard equalled. The intensity of the first movement, with its episode of melody, was a thrilling contrast without forcing the piano beyond its limitations of agreeableness.

The "Nocturne" was played with an opulent sonority and contrasted delicacy that revealed new beauties in the hackneyed piece. His use of the rubato never exceeded the limits of good taste—I might better say of inspired effort.

Rachmaninoff revealed to us a Chopin of virility, not a neurotic obsessed by sentimentality. And so I might go thru his entire program, citing the many excellencies of his incomparable playing.

His former appearances here impressed me as being of phenomenal character, but this last concert raised me to even higher altitudes of artistic enjoyment. I have no hesitation in proclaiming him the greatest personality on the concert stage today.

And his greatest achievement—aside from his wonderful pianism—is his attitude at the instrument—one utterly devoid of affectation or posing. Come to think of it, only the truly great can do this successfully.

There is no camouflage of elongated tresses or posturing mannerisms; the sincerity of the true creative and interpretative artist is apparent in all that he does and he does artistic things no other living artist can do. He uses his magnificent technic as a means of artistic expression with no apparent thought of self-aggrandizement.

Concert and Opera Schedule

SUNDAY AFTERNOON, Dec. 17,
Sofie Braslau and Erika Morini, fa-