

A Piano Becomes a Living Thing When Rachmaninoff Is Present

By WALTER D. HICKMAN.

A piano came to life Sunday afternoon at the Murat Theater.

The cause was Sergel Rachmaninoff. Have heard much about it being necessary for a great artist to be in just the right mood.

Rachmaninoff seems to control his moods and make them bow to his will and his wonderful hands. The piano yielded to every demand of Rachmaninoff.

He still remains far away from his audience while playing. He seems to be alone, just he and the piano. The audience seems to be recognized only when it forces itself upon the attention of the player.

I had the favor yesterday to have a seat so I could see the hands of Rachmaninoff upon the keyboard. Although his face was expressionless while he played, yet he created perfect melody. No fireworks or drama is used by this man. He has the technique and the power to cause a piano to come to life.

Although I marveled at his hands, yet the picture was not ruined. I dreamed in harmony with the mood of the music. New beauty of sound came to me yesterday afternoon. Rachmaninoff created for me a tonal carpet upon which I went soaring into strange but marvelous realms.

Then suddenly I would get back to this world and see the fingers going over the keys in perfect control. The piano was a slave to the mood demanded by this perfect player.

The only way I can judge music is by what happens within myself. I have my own little way of knowing and recognizing when the brain causes the hands to create a rich fabric of tone. I can't create anything that sounds beautiful in the realm of music, but I know what Rachmaninoff did to me yesterday. He just ruined me, that was all.

I left the theater determined to keep before me the picture of marvelous beauty that he created. The first time that I climbed way up in the clouds and became lost was during the playing of Liszt's "Sonata, B Minor." Here was the weaving of a rich fabric of tone. No fancy work, but the deliberate challenge of respect for great music. Here I found the clear tone, perfect pedaling.

Had the thought after I climbed out of the clouds and caught my breath before the Chopin group was played, that here is functioning the deliberate artist who carefully and accurately accomplishes perfection. Not an accident, but a formula which results in perfection while Rachmaninoff is at the piano.

Of the four programmed Chopin numbers, I found the most delight in "Scherzo" and the "Ballade." He gave two encores, both Chopin waltzes. The audience gave proof after this group of the conviction that here was Chopin played as he should be played.

The fourth group consisted of three numbers composed by Rachmaninoff. The easy favorite was "Prelude G major." Then came the closing number, a waltz, "Kunstlerleben," by Strauss and arranged by Godowsky. May be wrong in this, but to me this was the most difficult thing played during the concert although it seemed so easy to Rachmaninoff.

Rachmaninoff yesterday afternoon often made me think that he is the

most accurate pianist before the public today.

Every seat on both floors of the Murat were filled, the only vacant seats being in the boxes. Again, Ona B. Tablot has given Indianapolis an artist that is loved here.

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SOME IMPRESSION ON "FAUST" AS OPERA

Gallo is a man who knows how to organize operatic companies so they will not become stranded in the middle of the season.

He is the only one that I know who has successfully put opera on the road and making it pay its own way. At the Murat Sunday night the San Carlo Opera Company presented "Faust." A splendid audience was present.

I do not expect perfection of a touring road company of opera. Am satisfied when the principals have good voices and the orchestra is sufficient to present the score.

As "Faust" was presented last night at the Murat I was not satisfied with the entire product. The orchestra was too small to meet the demand of the scale, although Aldo Franchetti, conductor, conducted with intelligence, he resorted to the spoken word of his musicians at times. That always troubles me.

Elda Vetroi as Marguerite possesses a good voice and a nice dramatic sense which made her work stand out above all others in the cast. She was splendid during the scene in which she becomes charmed with the jewels and showed good dramatic qualities in the prison scene.

Giuseppe Interrante as Valentine seemed to rank next in commanding attention. His death scene following the duel was satisfactory. Charles Hart was the Faust and Amund Sjøvik was the evil spirit, Mephistopheles. Probably I expect too much acting in my opera, but both men had well trained voices.

Was disappointed in the way the peasants danced during the fair scene. Here was uneven work. And yet I do not want to be unfair to this organization which makes it possible for us to hear opera presented in an intelligent manner. The principles were all satisfactory in voice.

I have the greatest respect for what the San Carlo Opera Company is accomplishing, but I did desire a larger orchestra last night and a better trained chorus.

And yet I welcome the opportunity to see this company present "Faust," because we go to opera for the voice and the orchestra. Was presented at the Murat as a regular touring attraction.

MRS. M. E. LUCAS RITES TUESDAY

Burial Will Be in Crown Hill
Cemetery.

Funeral services of Mrs. Mary E. Lucas, 81, who died Sunday at the home of her daughter, Mrs. E. C.