

# Rachmaninoff's Genius Delights Calgary Audience

Miracles in Music Performed by Gifted Composer, Whose Piano Recital Programme Brings Wonderful Demonstration

(By ANNIE GLEN BRODER)

A noble discontent, prompting every new endeavor and widening all horizons, musical and other, is so much a part of every earnest nature that to admit that any one performer or performance is entirely satisfying, seems to set an unobtainable limit to possibility. Yet genuine admiration as a stimulus and incentive should counteract any danger arising from an abnegation of critical rights where they exist, the common practice of carping and cavilling not being included in this category. Such reflections are naturally aroused by the Rachmaninoff recital which, "preluded" by a famous name and a romantic composition, culled forth a wonderful demonstration of enthusiasm from an audience that included representative citizens, musicians and students and quite a surprising number of business-men. How and why the C Sharp Minor Prelude, fine as it is, has appealed to the most prosaic and technically untrained, as well as to connoisseurs of the unusual when it first appeared is one of the puzzles of the musical world that no one can solve. But so far as Calgary, and many other cities like it are concerned, that was the lodestone that drew the multitude on Friday night to the Palace, whose manager is much to be commended for his acumen and enterprise. Being there, the opportunity was afforded thoroughly to enjoy a programme which if offered without the glamour of a fascinating number and the prospect of more thrills of the

same barbaric and splendid character, might have been thought too much for laymen and "ladies of fashion" to appreciate. "Satisfying" is the word. At this stage of the record the word "satisfying" again occurs as the numbers selected were of real beauty and their manner of presentation was such as to keep the perfect perspective the rights of composer and performer. Both in his own works and in demonstrating the ideas of others virtuosity never once predominated over essential values. Greater pianists there may be, but few so well proportioned, admirably restrained and resourceful as Sergei Rachmaninoff.

Gluck's Air de Ballet from Alceste, was a fine piece of work, for clear and clean outline in the original theme (in the manner of its period) with the modern art embellishments of Saint-Saens.

### Wonderful Effects

The C Minor variations of Beethoven, from a theme amazingly economic in design, but majestic in effect, containing within itself the germ of a wonderful evolution, were developed in what seemed an inevitable way, affording a splendid example of Beethoven's masterly organic treatment of a subject, as compared, for instance, with Liszt's transformation processes and loose linking up of melodic material.

It was a rare pleasure to hear the G Minor Sonata, of Schumann, with its rhythms, both normally accented and syncopated, played with such momentum and speed, while the lovely second movement lacked for nothing in the way of singing tone.

Of the Chopin selections the Etude in E, was most expressive, though its melodic outline, rather long drawn out, the difficult middle section with its cross accents being taken in the contrary at a terrific pace. The Ballade in A, Flat, afforded some beautiful high lights, also low tones in the inner part that are seldom brought out. An individual reading was at any rate refreshing, after a somewhat painful familiarity with conventional performances. Rachmaninoff's own Etude Tableau was a lurid tone picture that stirred the blood and excited the nerves in a typically Russian way, the C Sharp Minor Prelude previously mentioned being a model of well graded sonority and judicious reticence. As one had ventured to predict, there was a marked difference between his perfectly controlled and cleverly suggested effects, and the exaggerated sentimentality of his imitators.

### Melodious and Refined

A petrarcan Sonnet represented Liszt in a melodious and refined mood, and the Polonaise in E provided occasion for brilliant execution and finesse beside affording as such dazzling compositions usually do, what dramatists call a good "curtain," and audiences consider a splendid spring board for innumerable encores, which on this occasion Rachmaninoff was gracious enough to give in full measure. Of these, the Troika Ride of Tchaikovsky, may be mentioned as particularly characteristic and effective.

In sum, the internal evidences of constructive ability made the work of this famous recitalist specially enjoyable, as compared with more facile interpretation entirely from the outside. As to the technique of his instrument, the amount of repercussion, noticeable and the strong impact of melodic tone were somewhat in the manner of an earlier day, but in no case did the rebound fail to corre-

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spond to the dynamic pressure employed. Considering the gravity and resonance of his style his pedaling was lighter and more skillfully applied than by any virtuoso heard here since Godowsky. A very dignified demeanor and a pleasant smile relieved a certain sombreness inevitable to a serious artist who portrays the depths as well as the heights of musical feeling.

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