

Music

RACHMANINOFF RECITAL.

First of the great solo artists to visit Cincinnati this season, Sergel Rachmaninoff, famous Russian composer and pianist, attracted an audience of generous proportions to Emery Auditorium last night.

A dreary sight greeted the gaze of the audience upon assembling, the regular symphony setting having been shorn of chairs, but not of platforms, leaving as the only decorative object the grand piano, which soon was to be vitalized by the art of a great performer.

While background is not indispensable where true art is concerned, a virtuosi like Rachmaninoff assuredly deserves to be presented to an admiring public in suitable surroundings, in environment commensurate with the aesthetic quality of his playing.

Rachmaninoff's artistry need not be discussed at this late day. Long recognized as a giant of the keyboard, the great Russian is known throughout America and Europe for his brilliant technique, his scholarly perception, his wonderful singing tone, clarity of phrasing, intellectual and emotional qualities.

To review a Rachmaninoff recital is merely to reiterate some of the numerous encomiums previously recorded concerning his pianistic effort. Last night Rachmaninoff seemed to be in meditative mood. Although agreeable contrast was offered in the programmed numbers, they were, in the main, profound. It was the kind of a program that Cincinnati music lovers relish most from Rachmaninoff, and with the impressive opening bars of the Bach Partita No. 4, in D major, it was evident that the artist of the evening was to be heard at his best.

The Overture and Sarabande were delightfully interpreted, and in the concluding Gigue Rachmaninoff set a terrific tempo which, notwithstanding its speed, was distinguished by remarkable clarity of enunciation and a bold outlining of the progressive sequences.

The triumph of the evening was achieved in the playing of the Chopin Sonata in B minor. It was an exceedingly vigorous rendition, full of the accustomed fire and boldness for which Rachmaninoff is noted, and yet marked by a degree of poetic expression seldom heard from the concert platform, even when Rachmaninoff is presiding. In the presentation of the Chopin composition Rachmaninoff rose to supreme heights. The Chopin lilt never was lost, the graceful quality of the music never was submerged, nor the round, full, sonorous beauty of a perfect singing tone neglected by the artist. Those who have thought Rachmaninoff cold upon other occasions, last night must have been convinced of their error.

Transcriptions of Schubert compositions, "Impromptu" and "The Brooklet," and of Kreisler's familiar "Liebesfreud" presented Rachmaninoff in the dual capacity of composer and pianist. The transcriptions proved to be interesting musically as was their performance.

One of the outstanding artistic gems of the evening was the insinuating grace of the Liszt "Dance of the Gnomes," tinged with such impish glee by the player that the audience manifested a desire for repetition. In the Liszt "Heroics" the artist gave further evidence of his vitality and his great technical equipment.

Encores brought forth the usual array of original and other compositions, played in characteristic fashion to the entire satisfaction of a discriminating and admiring audience.

WILLIAM SMITH GOLDENBURG.