

RACHMANINOFF PLACES THRALL UPON AUDIENCE

Expositions Clothed in So-
norous Virility Enthusias-
tically Received

By WILSON G. SMITH

Rachmaninoff again upon his visitation Monday night attracted a near-capacity audience to Masonic hall, and thru his irresistible pianism held them in thrall. Now, artists of the pianistic persuasion—like ancient Gaul—are divided into three classes.

The musician-pianist, who uses his technic to give a scholarly and analytical exposition of the composition in hand; the virtuoso-pianist, who exalts technic and keyboard marathonism largely for personal aggrandizement and display; and lastly, the player who plays like an improvisator, forgetting in his intent all but the emotional and poetic content to be interpreted, but subjecting himself to the limitations of poise, balance and analytical considerations.

As a matter of fact, the last species comprehends the highest of pianism, and—I regret to say—few there are of the chosen ceteris, altho many are called, or think they are.

Concrete Embodiment

Rachmaninoff is a concrete embodiment of all three of the classes named, altho he does not possess the subtle poetry and spirituality that sublimate the last mentioned group. Scholarly and analytical he is to the ultimate degree; technic he has in its most brilliant estate, but his tones are clothed with a sonority that refuses to yield to the gossamer tints of shadings such as Paderewski and De Buschmann realize. His flights into the realms of poetry impress one as being more dynamic coloring than emotional.

This was most manifest in the Chopin Sonata which he played with astounding technical finish and virility. No doubt my friend Huneker—the most gifted of critics—would have been delighted with his interpretation of it, for he gave us the "Greater Chopin" imbued with virility and masculinity, but in so doing one listened in vain for the more subtle charm and iridescence of the immortal tone poet.

Superb Brillancy

However, the breadth of his reading and the superb brilliancy of its execution made adequate atonement. Viewed in the light of modern pianism it was a stupendous achievement. Virtuosity also found a glittering exposition in the group of Liszt compositions.

They were purely exercises of pyrotechnics, and as such were played with astounding facility and effect. An impromptu of Schubert, and the pianist's transcription of a Schubert song, were delightfully given, wherein the telling sonority of the piano was heard in full expression.

Rachmaninoff is essentially a composer-pianist, one who brings to light all the essentials of scholarly and analytical interpretation. He is not a virtuoso, nor a temporary pianist who unites in such an exalted degree the requisites that the hyphenated term implies.

And it is my opinion that in saying this I reach the ultimate in praise. It is hardly necessary to add that his every effort was received with unrestrained enthusiasm by the auditors.