

Rachmaninoff's Mastery of Piano Sways Emotions Of Enthralled Audience

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Instrumental music in its highest form was last night heard at the Majestic Theater, when Sergei Rachmaninoff, the great Russian pianist and composer, presented a program that enthralled a throng of listeners that overflowed the seating capacity. Many stood at the rear of the first floor throughout the performance.

The concert, which was the fourth in the series of five all-star attractions booked for the 1926-27 music season under the auspices of the Harrisburg Music Association and THE PATRIOT and THE EVENING NEWS, was most enjoyable. The program was especially appealing, composed of a wide variety of pianoforte masterpieces wherein the pianist was en-

abled to show almost every phase of his rare art.

With his re-appearance here after an absence of two years, Rachmaninoff but the more firmly established himself in the admiration of his hearers. Those at last night's performance can appreciate the sentiment expressed by many of the leading music critics that Rachmaninoff is one of the leading pianists of all time. In addition to his fame as a pianist, he is also one of the leading composers of the age, and is steadily adding to his reputation in that respect.

That the program was received last night with the complete commendation of the audience was shown by the spontaneous out-

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RACHMANINOFF SWAYS THROUGH

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bursts of applause that greeted the performer at the end of each offering. He is indeed master of the keyboard. In addition to his technical equipment, he is also possessed of a temperament that communicates itself to the listener even as the first chords of music are struck.

Rachmaninoff is devoid of any of the mannerisms that many piano players effect. Possibly he does not need to advertise his art by any frankness of appearance inasmuch as he plays directly upon the hearts of his hearers. In appearance he is tall and gaunt—probably six feet in height. His mien is of a serious character.

A rather remarkable feature of the performance was the fact that Rachmaninoff played the entire program from memory. It seems that one of the unerring marks of musical genius is the gift or acquirement of a retentive memory. It could well be termed a feat in itself, to play a program, such as was presented last night, without a guiding score.

Another astonishing accomplishment in the perfect control the player has over his left hand. The left hand fairly vied with the right in last night's marvelous performance.

The Opening Numbers

The program opened with the Sonata, Opus 28, by Beethoven, the centenary of whose birth is being observed this year, by musicians all over the world. The work has four movements, "Theme and Variations," "Scherzo," "March Funerale" and "Allegro."

The "Theme" was opened in an easy manner, the melody being emphasized throughout. The entire figure was portrayed in a most finished way. The "Scherzo" followed with more marked vigor, and a stinging tone quality. Then was played the "March Funerale" in which the minor mode predominated, the main theme re-occurring repeatedly.

The "Allegro" movement started with a rush and was accentuated throughout.

The second offering was the "Fantaisie Wanderer" by Schubert. Last. The opening of the number was almost violent in character, leading to a melodic figure, plastic in style. The selection was featured by a number of chromatic scales and broken chords that tested the technique of the player, all of which difficulties were easily overcome by the artist.

Then were played three numbers by Chopin (a) "Rondo," Opus 16; (b) "Nocturne" and (c) "Waltz." The "Rondo" was especially brilliant in character, in addition to its containing innumerable passages marked by trills and broken chords. The "Nocturne" was emphasized by a number of stirring measures where the left hand of the player showed up to much advantage. The "Waltz" was of a lively enchanting style.

Written By Rachmaninoff

"Fairy Tales," by Medtner, (a) in "F Minor, Opus 26," and (b) in "B Minor, Opus 20," were the next presentation. The second offering produced a most weird effect, as if the tale as told contained some hair-raising events. Then was played the "Prelude," written by Rachmaninoff. The offering abounded in trills and fancy figures, all of which were played with the rarest skill.

The last number on the program was the "Rakoczy March," by Liszt. In this number were brought out the great talents of the player to the fullest possible advantage. There sounded the roll of drums and the tread as of marching men. The player would start at the top of the keyboard to run down to the lower part of the instrument in the most intricate music passages. Then would follow more rumbles, to which were added chords of music thrown promiscuously but not indiscriminately. It seemed as if the artist was trying to test out the qualities of the big piano. The number ended in a perfect blaze of musical glory.

The end of the number was greeted by a tremendous swell of applause in appreciation of the work of the genius. After bowing in response to several calls, Rachmaninoff played, as an encore, a waltz by Chopin.

His Own Composition

The audience, however, was not satisfied. Possibly the pianist sensed what his listeners were demanding. It was the celebrated "Prelude in C-Sharp Minor," by Rachmaninoff himself. The striking of the first chords of the number was the signal for a further burst of applause—of a character that drowned the sound of the opening measures.

The pianist appeared to put his all into the playing of the offering. It was the case of a pianoforte masterpiece being played by a master pianist,—the composer of the number died away, the audience reluctantly departed. The concert was over.

The fifth and last attraction of the present series will be the return, on Thursday, March 10, of the New York Philharmonic Orchestra, which scored such a triumph here earlier in the season.

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