

## RECORD AUDIENCE APPLAUDS PIANIST

Princess Theatre Filled Sunday for Concert of Sergei Rachmaninoff

### CLASSICS INTERPRETED

Artist Plays Celebrated Beethoven Sonata to Commemorate Centenary—Many Encores Given

Rachmaninoff played before what is probably a record concert audience in the Princess Theatre yesterday afternoon. Every seat was taken, chairs were squeezed in where it was possible; many had to go away disappointed. The tall, gaunt, angular composer-pianist gave generously of his art. To his already very heavy programme he added no less than four encores and, as was expected, he played his celebrated Prelude, and was deliciously acclaimed.

To his Beethoven, Mendelssohn, Schumann, Liszt, Medtner, Rachmaninoff, Strauss selections he added Chopin and Moussorgsky, a waltz by the former, a dance by the composer of "Boris Godounoff." Rachmaninoff looked tired, but played indefatigably, with uncanny precision and technique, though some of the works he interpreted were overwhelming, notably Schumann's Etudes Symphoniques and Liszt's Funerailles.

Two compositions by himself, etudes, were rather disappointing. In these, Rachmaninoff seems to have struck a new path, and to be just a bit lost in the process. There was little melody and nothing otherwise remarkable about them; they sounded like attempts, something in an experimental phase of his own musical development—neither the old nor the new in music. Played, of course, with great brilliancy.

#### BEETHOVEN SONATA.

The sonata which Beethoven completed in 1800, and dedicated to Prince Lichnowsky, celebrated for the many variations on a delicate theme; and more particularly for the funeral march "sulla morte d'un eroe."

was first on the programme. Rachmaninoff chose one of the finest of the great master's compositions to commemorate his death, one hundred years ago. The delicacy which is required for the variations, the scherzo and the final allegro movement was wonderfully brought out by this man, whose colossal strength was to be tested later in the Schumann and Liszt compositions.

Two etudes by Mendelssohn followed. They were interesting mainly from the point of view of the amazing agility of the pianist. The most finished, most artistically perfect part of the programme came with Schumann's symphonic etudes, in which Rachmaninoff revealed himself as very great. It was a tour de force, a musical masterpiece played in a masterful way.

Those same fingers that conjured forth the fleeting legato runs in the Beethoven and Mendelssohn parts

and the poignant cantando parts in the funeral march were brought to a different test with Liszt's "Funeral." Like hammer blows they rained down in the fury of ever-increasing force of maddening church-bells, until it seemed impossible that the instrument could stand up under it. The left-hand staccato grew and grew, while the feverish right-hand octave runs kept up the crescendo until there came an overpowering, shattering climax, fearful in volume and descriptive power.

Two short modern pieces, "Fairy Tales," by Medtner, were interesting as novelties. Rachmaninoff followed with his two etudes. An ancient Strauss waltz, restored and built up again by Taussig, was extremely sympathetic, melodious and played with the necessary "gemutlichkeit" and abandon.

After all this, Rachmaninoff gracefully gave more. The audience refus-

ed to budge until he played a waltz by Chopin and another encore. He came back and struck up the unmistakable two first chords of the famous prelude, and was greeted with loud cries of approbation. To end a potent entertainment, he played a dance by Moussorgsky. To demand more would have been unfair, but there were many who lingered in faint hopes, and who did not join the stream until the stage lights were put out.

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