

RACHMANINOFF AND ORCHESTRA IN TRIUMPH

Russian Pianist's Concerto Greatest Artistic Achievement of St. Louis Organization.

The opinion of certain noted critics in this country and Europe which gives Sergi Vassilievich Rachmaninoff the leading place among all living musicians received ample grounds for credence in the performance of the great Russian with the St. Louis Symphony Orchestra at the Odeon yesterday afternoon.

A more compelling and delightful exhibition of virtuosity has rarely, if ever, been witnessed in St. Louis, than Rachmaninoff's playing of his Concerto for Piano and Orchestra, No. 2 in C minor, Op. 18. Its marvelous presentation by the soloist and assistance by Director Max Zach and his musicians formed easily the greatest artistic achievement in the history of the local orchestra.

The effect was one of absolute musical perfection. The content of the score demonstrated a master hand, and an understanding of possibilities of the piano and orchestral technique of an exceptional order. Then, naturally, the interpretation could not have been improved on, as the master knew what he meant when he wrote, and the pianistic equipment of the player was abundantly adequate to objectify his brilliant ideas in equally brilliant instrumentation.

Accompaniment Was Finished.

In its part of the production, the orchestra lagged not an iota behind the master. The accompaniment was finished and satisfying in every detail, and spoke volumes for the preparation given it by Director Zach. That able conductor, incidentally, put in about as strenuous an afternoon's work as any since he has taken charge of the orchestra.

His eyes were glued to the score, and his motioned directions were given without even a glance in the direction of the parts of the orchestra they were signaling. At the end he seemed well fatigued, but evidently as well satisfied as was the audience and Rachmaninoff with the finished product.

The audience was the largest which has attended any afternoon concert this season, or in many seasons. As a rule the afternoon gatherings, made up principally of women, do not bestir themselves to much clamorous enthusiasm. This order was varied yesterday with thunderous applause, stamping of feet and shouts of 'bravo!'

The concerto was the final number on the program, but at its conclusion hardly half a dozen persons made a move to depart. Instead everyone stayed to applaud, and after a number of recalls, the soloist gave his famous prelude as an encore.

In the admiration of Rachmaninoff and his work the balance of the program was somewhat submerged, but it was one of the very best so far given, and none this season was better played. With each succeeding concert and the added practice, the orchestra develops finer ability and powers.

Orchestra Has to Rise.

These progressive strides were exhibited in the presentation of Schumann's Symphony No. 2, C major, Op. 61, one of the most interesting of that composer's orchestral works, but one requiring a high order of perfection in its rendition. It was given a clear and sympathetic reading by Zach, and his musicians invested all movements with a wealth of beautiful tone. At its close the director had to signal the orchestra to rise in deference to the sustained applause.

Equally captivating was the performance of Brahms' "Tragic" overture, with which the concert opened. This noble work reveals the great German at his best. His masterful command of orchestral dispositions is in evidence, but he gives greater rein to his fancy, and the result is more pleasing to the average concert-goer than is the case with most of Brahms' output. Particularly worthy of note was the part of the first violins in this number, though nowhere could a flaw be picked with the performance.

Rachmaninoff will again be soloist at this evening's concert, when yesterday's program will be repeated in its entirety.

J. VION PAPIN.