

## Music

Sergei Rachmaninoff, probably the greatest living musician, although not the greatest of pianists, played to an enormous audience in Elmwood Music hall last night. Reference to Rachmaninoff as a pianist is eminently justifiable for he gives a performance of exceeding beauty and value, but the term gives only a limited idea of the gigantic musical stature of the man.

He has not specialized exclusively in piano playing, nor is his technique extraordinary, but his pianism is distinguished by that breadth of judgment and supreme art to be looked for in the performance of such a master, no matter what instrument he may choose as his means of expression. The famous Russian thus takes his place easily and logically among the most celebrated pianists of the day.

Last evening's program was not weighty nor of intense interest except for the fact that it was made additionally attractive at the hands of the artist. The much favored Mozart "sonata," in A major, was the first number on the program and proved to be the high light among the evening's offerings, revealing the pianist at his best. His enlightening performance was wholly in keeping with classic tradition and style, yet marked by an individuality which disclosed all the old and many new beauties in the sonata. Exquisite tone color, all the required varieties of touch, wonderful clarity, and a most interesting treatment of the embellishments were the notable qualities of a perfectly proportioned interpretation. Daquin's "Le Coucou" was also defined in lines clean-cut and delicate, in a performance of the number superior to any, previously heard by the writer.

Then followed the Debussy suite, "Children's Corner," not the most valuable of the works of the pioneer of moderns but thoroughly characteristic and, as such, interesting. Of the four numbers of the suite the first, "Doctor Gradus ad Parnassum" is perhaps the cleverest in its surprising thematic treatment of the children's daily dose of elementary finger exercises. Two others of the set which met with favor were the "Serenade of a Doll" and "Gollwogg's Cake Walk" which has a strongly American flavor in its syncopated rhythms.

A scant Chopin group held the "Barcarolle"—in which the composer seems to have copied himself to the extent of setting forth a Chopin potpourri—and the "Valse" in E flat major. This music fully revealed the poet, Rachmaninoff, who, insistently recalled at its close, gave two additional numbers. The first was the Chopin C sharp minor "waltz," the old stand-by which can be played anywhere, anytime, and always find favor, the second, the Rachmaninoff C sharp minor "Prelude." The audience had been waiting patiently for the latter and just as impatiently interrupted the opening bars to express its delight.

The composer's own magnificent interpretation of his most popular composition was again something in the nature of a revelation. No Rachmaninoff concert would be complete without the piece in spite of the fact that pianists, real, would-be, and never-could-be, have worn it threadbare and to the extent that one harassed critic pronounced it a work evidently written on the death of a Brooklyn piano tuner. Other Rachmaninoff works on the program were the "Polichinelle" and the enchanting "Barcarolle," Opus 10.

It would seem that brilliancy is not Rachmaninoff's forte as a performer, probably on account of his technical limitations. He displayed considerable virtuosity, however, in the "Memento Capriccioso" of Weber but the final Liszt "Rhapsodie Espagnole" proved a rather deadly affair.

The local representatives of the Ellis series, Bessie Bellanca, Louise Michael and Genevieve Kraft, continuing in their laudable efforts to provide an appropriate concert stage setting, succeeded in relieving the harsh lines of the platform by the use of artistic scenery, foliage and shaded light.

E. D.