

## Review:

**Königsberger Hartungsche Zeitung 1910-11-12) (orig.German)**

### **Königsberger Symphonic Concerts, conductor Prof. Brode**

Last symphony concert, solemnly opened with the magical sounds of Weber's 'Elfenkönig' silver horn, **also offered a very exciting new acquaintance with the appearance of Sergei Rachmaninoff**, the brilliant pianist of new young-Russian descent and character. Although his piano concerto nr 2 in C-minor had already been successfully introduced here 3 years ago by Ossip Gabrilowitsch, in the hands of the composer it gained even more characteristic prestige. Rachmaninoff, based in Moscow since 1893, is vividly celebrated there as pianist and composer and in this capacity he follows the tracks of Tchaikovsky and Arensky. He cultivates even more consequently and intentionally the so called Russian native art of the two of them – as far as this is possible today in musical art which, in its essence, is still an international language – but how could the most dedicated Slavophile be able to do without the notorious reference to Western European patterns? Still, the East-Slavic peculiarity is easily recognized because of the change between soft melancholy (a bit too soft for our stronger Germanic feeling) and unbridled wildness. We may also be interested in a very high grade in the technical side of Rachmaninoff's strongly Sarmatian-influenced concerto – a technical kind that has become European common property quite a long time in piano playing, that has been exploited in all directions and become subordinate to the orchestra. In the accumulation and compilation of passages, Rachmaninoff surpasses his role models to which one also may count in the broader sense, apart from the Russians mentioned, the modern French and Norwegians – and neither in the harmony and rhythmic, nor in the use of the orchestra can one deny him diversity of knowledge or autonomy of ability. The sound effect is at its finest in the Adagio whose often varied sensitive melody arouses a sympathetic echo, in particular on the clarinet. The allegro movements have more impulsive temperament than inner glow, but especially in rhythmic respect they offer material for brilliant playing, and cantabile episodes appear at the right time as a complement. In Germany, this concerto has been introduced in 1903 for the first time by Wassily Sapellnikoff and (in Vienna) by Rachmaninoff himself. Also here, the excellent virtuoso's healthy, full-blooded power has contributed to the success of the composition; moreover, it has carefully and beautifully been accompanied under Professor Brode's direction. The soloist offered only a few encores: some of his own Preludes, first the opus 3, C sharp minor (dedicated to his master Arensky) which is largely available in elegant albums. Its pianistic effect may be stronger than the other three from a later, more extensive collection, but the chromatic downward-moving fourths above the pedal point in the Agitato that follows after the Lento can hardly be called a harmonic fineness. Despite their modest appearance, the pieces from op. 23 show perhaps more inner merits. The first, with its fine bouncing trills could even represent a modern Scarlatti. In his double capacity, the interesting guest aroused a very lively participation.

Dp.

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