

Review

KURJER WILENSKI, 1911-11-29 (Orig.: Polish)

S. W. Rachmaninoff.

The Russian, Polish, and Jewish intelligentsia filled the audience to its capacity at the concert of this distinguished composer, already known and enjoying great acclaim in both hemispheres of the world.

Rachmaninoff primarily earned the respect of the great priests of criticism because, while today almost every composer dreams of writing works for a large orchestra with its multifaceted effects, he remained faithful to the piano not only in the smaller pieces of his composition, but also in works based on broad themes. This stems, in part, from the fact that this composer is a pure romantic, and no orchestral ensemble could have sculpted the subtleties of his compositions, nor captured their psyche, to such an extent. True, the composer Rachmaninoff perhaps has such faith in the piano because he himself is a consummate virtuoso and has the ability to directly imbue listeners with the wonderful creations of his inspiration through his favorite instrument. He has the ability, as an author, to interpret them in his own way, and in this self-interpretation, always surround them with an aura of improvisation. In this respect, Rachmaninoff holds the foremost place among contemporary composers. As for yesterday's program, the only disappointment for those gathered was that they didn't hear the famous "Isle of the Dead," but although we were deprived of that, the Sonata Op. 28, with its immense power and at the same time written against a strictly Romantic backdrop, gave us an incredibly powerful impression. The crowning glory of the concert, however, was the second and third sections, in which the great artist gave us the famous pearls of his work, such as "Polichinelle," a strangely subtle, delicate, slightly grotesque piece, like "Barcarolle" op. 10, no. 3, in which the brilliance of its construction dazzles – such as the highly original concept of the preludes in G-flat major and C minor. Generally, the audience was rapt and could not part with this outstanding artist, endlessly calling him back.

[Translation: (c) J. Falley]