

# MUSIC

## *Rachmaninoff Stirs Audience.*

By OLIN DOWNES.

The power of the musical personality of Sergel Rachmaninoff is now known to his many audiences. The piano compositions which he performed at his recital last night in Carnegie Hall are also familiar. But again they were pregnant with meaning which was not twice told. A Bach-Tausig Chorale, the Beethoven sonata, Opus 31, No. 2, a Chopin group of the F sharp minor polonaise, a mazurka, the A flat waltz, the C sharp minor scherzo; Liszt's "Funerailles," "Valse oubliée" and "Forest Murmurs," pieces of Medtner and Rachmaninoff and Balakireff's "Islamey" Fantasy—thus the printed program, and the accustomed concert-goer, on the basis of this information, could under ordinary circumstances have curled himself in his corner and gone to sleep, or the reviewer have prepared a series of well-worn platitudes and retired early.

But platitudes and Mr. Rachmaninoff are not bed-fellows. Familiar music under his hands is reborn. We are stirred by it as we were stirred years ago, when the compositions were novel to us. Mr. Rachmaninoff evoked a storm of applause with the Beethoven sonata, before he had risen to greater heights of virtuosity and dramatic interpretation in the pieces by Chopin. Not many pianists could play the F sharp minor polonaise, that tremendous fresco of battle, with the mazurka which is sad and half mute like the figures in a tapestry of long ago—the mazurka interrupted by the polonaise theme which stalks in the bass and then erupts like a volcano from the instrument—not many could play this gigantic piece with the power and length of line that it requires, and then turn to a mazurka, and make as much of the miniature. But the climax of this group was the dramatic scherzo, which Mr. Rachmaninoff takes at a whirling pace, nevertheless giving all possible majesty to the chorale as it mounts in its final form to the shattering climax. The scherzo, like the rest of the program, is almost too familiar, yet it seldom receives its due, and should not be played by a pianist with less than Mr. Rachmaninoff's strength, reserve and immense inner fire.

He is the man, too, because of his intellectuality and sense of form for the impassioned rhetoric of a Liszt, to whose utterance he can give more than rhetoric; and he is a virtuoso for the "Islamey" Fantasy. It is mere repetition of things of less importance than Mr. Rachmaninoff's music and performances to add that the enthusiasm of the audience increased as the evening progressed, and that a man with the mien and garb of a dignified professor stirred an audience as the most petted and sensational of virtuosos seldom do.

## *Quartet Ends Its Season Here.*

The Musical Art Quartet, in its final appearance in this city last night at the Town Hall, presented one of its characteristically varied and interesting programs. The organization's usual international lists do not prevent it from producing, from time to time, new works by local composers.

Last night the native school of composition was represented by Ernest Schelling's "Tarantella," which was announced as a first New York hearing. This charming trifle by the versatile writer so pleased the auditors that the players repeated it.

Another first local hearing was Josef Suk's "Meditation," based upon an old Bohemian choral. Joaquin Turina's "La Oração del Torere" completed a delightful group with the items by Schelling and Suk.

The juxtaposition of such diversified short pieces balanced the two classics which opened and closed the program; Haydn's Quartet in C, Op. 54, No. 2, and Ernest Chausson's Concerto in D for piano, violin and string quartet. In the Chausson music the interpreters were Sascha Jacobsen, solo violin; Harry Kaufman, piano, and a string quartet composed of Paul Bernard and Harry Neidell, violins; Louis Kaufman, viola, and Marie Roemaet-Rosanoff, 'cello.

The playing of the various items on the evening's fare by the Musical Art Quartet was of the usual high standard individually and as an ensemble. Carefully planned effects in tone balance, entrances, phrasing and interpretation put the performances among the best the ensemble has yet given.

In the Chausson music, in which Mr. Jacobsen stood up in the fashion of other days, the ensemble was not so happy. The chief fault for this lay with the assisting pianist, Mr. Kaufman, who frequently seemed to forget that he was playing neither accompaniment, which he has made his special province, nor yet solo, a field in which his playing leaves much to be desired. Mr. Kaufman's art elsewhere is not here impugned, for he has shown his musicianship on other occasions and in other fields. Last night the delicate tapestry of Chausson took on colors and dynamics which were of a heaviness, boldness and virility, incongruous and out of proportion. The work became a piano solo accompanied by string instruments on more than one occasion, even when the piano had nothing but chords wandering over the keyboard.

The large audience was cordial.

B. G.