

SALVO OF APPLAUSE FOR RACHMANINOFF

**Piano Recital Draws Capacity
Audience to Carnegie Hall
—Encores Demanded.**

CHOPIN GROUP IS PLAYED

**His Own 'Etude Tableaux' Wins
Warm Enthusiasm—Bach,
Liszt, Beethoven Given.**

By OLIN DOWNES

Sergei Rachmaninoff's recital yesterday in Carnegie Hall was a return to the sort of spectacle which has not often been witnessed by audiences since the depression; a crowded hall, a gathering in festive mood, and, at the end, a stampede to the stage for the encores. This is one of the silliest of the manifestations that take place at concert appearances of famous musicians, but it is possible that most virtuosi, if not Mr. Rachmaninoff, would willingly exchange whatever irritation such demonstration would cause in a thoughtful man for the more dignified but less stimulating attitude of smaller and graver assemblies.

Furthermore, the encore hounds were not the only people present at this concert. As always when Mr. Rachmaninoff plays, the audience held many of the city's representative musicians. The pianist was in an artistic position to give these musicians food for thought and admiration.

Probably some of them, especially versed in the repertory of the piano, were inclined to marvel at the rapidity of the tempo taken with the Bach G minor organ fugue in the Liszt transcription. They may have felt that this fugue lost some measure of its energy and virility of accent in exchange for a performance astonishingly clear, dexterous. But they would also admit, without doubt, that in long line and grand proportions, counting in the superb prelude with the fugue, it was a noteworthy achievement.

Beethoven Sonata Pleases

A finer performance followed, in fact, one of the finest of the afternoon, to wit, that of the Beethoven sonata, Op. 109, in E major. This wonderful work is comparatively seldom played, and possibly for the reason that it does not carry with the public as other of the later Beethoven sonatas do. Opus 109 is, perhaps, too simple in thematic material, too consummate in its technical working out, and in the marvels of Beethoven's thought, to be taken at its full value. The composition, studied and restudied, has an endless fascination, and offers a task which requires a pianist of not less than Mr. Rachmaninoff's capacities to do it justice. Yes! greater he who can adequately interpret this sonata than he who takes a city!

As for the audience, it applauded this performance politely, and indulged itself in salvos of applause when Mr. Rachmaninoff played his own "Etude tableaux" and compositions of Liszt. Those performances were exceptional, especially the poetical playing of the "Sonetto della Petrarca," but they were of less import in the sheerly musical and interpretative sense than the interpretation of the sonata.

Four Chopin Selections

Mr. Rachmaninoff chose to play four of the lesser works of Chopin, the most important of these being the Polonaise in C minor. He also played a Nocturne and a Mazurka, which the program did not designate by their keys or opus numbers, ending this group with the seldom-heard Rondo Op. 16.

Why the identifying numbers should have been left from the two middle pieces of this group is a question which may properly be asked. There are many Chopin nocturnes and many more Chopin mazurkas. It is reasonable to assume that a number of those who attend a piano recital are familiar with the standard literature of the instrument.

On the other hand, there are certain to be many who heard a nocturne they have often admired, but who could not identify it and would have liked to. And Mr. Rachmaninoff could even have a little mercy upon reviewers in this respect!

The nocturne was the exquisite one in D flat major. The mazurka was one of the mazurkas in the key of F minor, and, as it happened, one of the most frequently played. Its number escapes this writer's memory. Those not present yesterday, or without detailed knowledge of Chopin's works, can never know from his pen which of the F minor mazurkas was played.

Mr. Rachmaninoff played the Polonaise with the proper freedom and heroic rhetoric. It is not so elaborate as some of the greater ones. Its simplicity companions its concentration. The striding, brooding bass makes the greater impression because of its repetitive repetition and sullen revolt. This commentator did not care for Mr. Rachmaninoff's performance of the Nocturne. He thought that it missed much of the poetry and delicate texture of the music. But the mazurka was more than rewarding, and the rather long-drawn but delicious parlor piece, with its tinkling of glass chandeliers and its piquant figures, was delightfully done.

Piano Style Embodied

The Rachmaninoff "Etudes Tableaux" performed on this occasion, from the set Opus 33, were those in C-sharp minor, G minor, E-flat minor and E-flat major. They embody Mr. Rachmaninoff's piano style, strikingly, and that is a style which may fairly be called Russian in the grand manner. If these pieces have not as much valuable material in them as other sets of Mr. Rachmaninoff's more recent piano compositions, they proved very effective through his performance.

He played the Liszt "Sonnet after Petrarch" in a way that fully matched the loftiness of the composer's thought. It is not often that we hear this work so played. It can sound sentimental and savor somewhat of platitudes. Yesterday afternoon it was pure poetry. The Wagner-Brassini "Fire Music" from "Walkuere" and the Paganini-Liszt Etude in E major finished the printed program, before the rush of the devotees to the stage, before the encores Mr. Rachmaninoff was playing as this reporter of the event left the hall. It was good to hear the Paganini-Liszt Etude. Why do we not hear more of these master-

studies and hear them more often?

No doubt it was with cause that Mr. Rachmaninoff emphasized on this program Liszt the composer and the transcriber. No composer or pianist could be intentionally regardless of the fiftieth anniversary of Liszt's birth. But it is only Mr. Alexander Siloti of this city who has appeared with orchestra recently in performance of compositions by Liszt for the combination of instruments, while no conductor hereabouts has followed Mr. Koussevitzky's example in Boston in performing the great "Faust" Symphony, or played a single one of the symphonic poems.

Mr. Rachmaninoff is not one to be insensible of the debt of the modern musical world to the greatest of all masters of the keyed instrument and the composer who was the prophet of whole schools of modern music. Doing Liszt honor, Mr. Rachmaninoff honored himself, displayed his superb mastery of his instrument and his art, and received the homage of an impressive gathering.