

## ONEGIN OFFERS SONG RECITAL

### Contralto's Voice Thrills Great Audience

Sigrd Oegin, whose first appearances here last season made an unusual sensation, thrilled a great audience yesterday afternoon at Symphony Hall by the richness and power of her phenomenal contralto voice. She did not confine herself to selections within the usual contralto range. Like Matzenauer, Schumann-Helk and so many others she attempted successfully songs with high notes and trills and other feats supposedly the exclusive prerogative of the soprano.

Oegin's voice is one of the most remarkable heard by this generation. It is a contralto with a wide range, unusual flexibility, and both warmth and brilliance of tone. Her singing is technically effective, though she is not always conscientious about keeping the exact vowel sound required by the text on high notes where another easier vowel can be substituted.

With such great natural gifts as hers she might become, with impeccable technique and more profoundly imaginative musicianship, one of the few supremely great singers. At present she makes only ordinary competent use of her superb voice. Yet people would doubtless flock to her concerts if she did nothing but sing scales and arpeggios, so rare is the beauty of her tones at their best.

Yesterday she began with a group of 19th century airs. It is a "stunt" for a contralto to sing such flowing and tripping measures as those of Pavesiello's "Il mio ben." As a "stunt" performance Mme Oegin's was commendable. But such music demands a light and flexible soprano voice.

She then sang a group of German songs by Schubert and Richard Strauss in which she made the most of every dramatic "point" offered by the text, not merely of the "Erlking," but of "Die Forelle" and of Strauss' "Caecilie," rather at the expense of the melody and phrasing.

A group of popular ballads by English and American composers ended the program. Bridge's effective if rather banal "Love Went a Riding" gave the singer opportunity for much opulence and vigor of tone as well as a rather melodramatic vehemence which brought down the house.

The most unfamiliar group was Scandinavian, of which Sinding's "Sylvellin" was the only familiar number. She did not quite seize the mood of this song, but on the other hand her "Scissors Grinder" by the almost forgotten Geijers, a contemporary of Weber, proved both rhythmically and melodically interesting to the audience. A "Lullaby" by Alice Tegner, mellifluously sung, was received with exceptional enthusiasm.

At the end of the concert, Mme Oegin added a reasonable number of encores, and then smilingly begged off from singing more. She had extra pieces during the program, had given lavishly of her best and quite justifiably felt unwilling to go on singing. She would probably have been kept singing up to about 10 p. m. if she had not begged off, to judge by the eagerness with which her admirers crowded to the front of the hall for the encores and the fervor of the applause.

### RACHMANINOFF FILLS BOSTON OPERA HOUSE

Despite a multitude of conflicting musical attractions yesterday afternoon, Sergei Rachmaninoff drew to his recital an audience such as too rarely

occupies the Opera House these days, an audience that filled floors and balconies and nearly all the boxes and that waxed enthusiastic at the close to the point of demanding and receiving five encores.

For the first number on his sonataless program Mr Rachmaninoff chose the prelude, Sarabande, and Bourree from Bach's second English suite. While superficially not difficult, the whirling theme of the prelude may degenerate under the hand of a mediocre artist into mere convolution, and the delicate simplicity of the Sarabande may become only thinness. Not so with Mr Rachmaninoff's playing of yesterday.

His rigid sense of rhythm and his innate austerity produced a performance of the prelude wholly satisfying and the full-bodied tone which he drew from the instrument made a rich and delicious thing of the Sarabande. It is unfortunate that more of the suite, the Courante and Allemande, particularly, were not incorporated in the program, for apparently both artist and audience were in mood for Bach yesterday.

While no other point on the program quite approached the Bach, the whole first part was very interesting and beautiful. The "Variations Serieuses" of Mendelssohn have overcome a constitutional objection to variations in many hearers. Mr Rachmaninoff's performance yesterday was a markedly good one.

While the Nocturne and the C sharp minor Scherzo of Chopin are altogether too much played of late, Mr Rachmaninoff almost made them fresh again. His performance might have given the clue to many of our modern self-styled apostles of Chopin. At this point the writer should have obeyed his better judgment and gone.

For if the first part of the program was almost superlative the second part was as much so of an opposite nature. The Liszt "Funerailles," which opened it, is marvellous in tragic moments, flamboyant in its brilliance and saccharine in sentiment. While Mr Rachmaninoff sitting brooding over the piano did succeed in imparting some of the fatalism of his own personality to the piece, it was still a whitened sepulchre of music. The performer did his best to breathe life. No one could have done more.

Following the "Funerailles" were some of the apparently inevitable "Etude Tableaux" by the pianist himself, and another Liszt composition, the "Rhapsodie Espagnole." The latter part of this was exactly like a very good pianola interpretation. It is only fair to say that but little more is possible.

It seems unfortunate that so able a pianist as Mr Rachmaninoff should dally so much with bombastic composition. A great recital always seems imminent, but there are inevitable bad spots in choice that destroy whatever favorable effect has been built up.

### SZUMOWSKA SOLOIST AT PEOPLE'S SYMPHONY

An audience which entirely filled the St James Theatre applauded the People's Symphony Orchestra yesterday afternoon. Mme Szumowska, who was heard here recently with the New York Philharmonic Orchestra, assisted. She played a concerto for pianoforte by Saint-Saens and was recalled several times. Her playing was on a level with that of her previous appearance.

Schubert's Unfinished Symphony appeared to be the most popular number with the audience, but it was closely rivaled by a light waltz, "Liebesglaeser," after the manner of Johann Strauss.

The performance of the first piece was a bit apathetic, but the remaining numbers both conductor and orchestra treated in their usual competent manner.

Next Sunday Henry Hadley, the first of the distinguished guest conductors promised this season, will conduct his own overture, "Herod," and his symphony, "The Four Seasons." Inez Eighbour, soprano, will sing with the orchestra an air from Weber's "Freischuetz."