

5 GREAT MUSICIANS HONOR AUER, 80

Zimbalist, Heifetz, Hofmann,
Gabrilowitsch, Rachmaninoff
Celebrate His Birthday.

PLAYS WITH HIS PUPILS

He Also Is Soloist in Tchaikovsky's
"Melodie"—Vast Audience Pays
Homage in Carnegie Hall.

By OLIN DOWNES.

Excitement ran high at the gala concert tendered Leopold Auer by five of the most famous musicians in the world last night in Carnegie Hall. This concert, in celebration of Mr. Auer's eightieth birthday, was given by two of his greatest pupils, Efrem Zimbalist and Jascha Heifetz, with the cooperation of Ossip Gabrilowitsch, Josef Hofmann and Sergei Rachmaninoff. A more impressive tribute could hardly have been paid a distinguished musician by colleagues and public. The audience comprised not only leaders in the musical and social activities of the city, but also a host of music lovers of every walk of life, whose demands for seats had exhausted the capacity of the hall long in advance of the concert.

The opening of the concert provided a unique spectacle—Auer himself, small, elderly, his keen eyes encased in horn-trimmed spectacles, and every inch the alert musician, with Zimbalist on one side of him, Heifetz on the other, and the three busily engaged in the triple concerto of Vivaldi; the two pupils, internationally famous, looking absurdly young and carrying themselves deferentially as ever they appeared in the old classroom at Petrograd; their master performing, not with the physical resiliency of youth, but with the earnestness and absorption that have given him his place in his art. It would not have looked preposterous at all if Mr. Auer had stopped and rapped the pupils over the knuckles, save that the quality of the performance forbade such an injustice. There, at any rate, was the teacher and the two pupils, each as intent on his task as if the Vivaldi had been a new task instead of an old and familiar one. With complete justness of pace and accent the performance went onward and ended appropriately with the brilliant and spirited playing of the cadenza composed by Josef Achron—and a musicianly job, too.

Mr. Auer might have been pardoned if, with a man of his years and still strenuous occupations as a teacher, the nervous tension of such a performance had shown more than it did. When he appeared as a soloist in the performance of Tchaikovsky's "Melodie" and Brahms's "Hungarian Dance" he showed assurance, authority and the spirit of the musician that flamed high.

It had been announced at the beginning of the concert—would the rule were more frequently followed—that there would be no encores. After repeated recalls of the violinist Mr. Zimbalist and Ossip Gabrilowitsch gave one of the most eloquent and musicianly performances of the Brahms piano and violin sonata it has ever been the privilege of the writer to hear—a performance which in itself would have made the concert memorable and deserving of a critical article.

Detailed criticism of the performances, however, is not in place here. The concert last night was not a demonstration, but an acknowledgment of Mr. Auer's services to his art. These services have been signalized particularly by the genius and commanding personalities of artists-pupils whom he has guided so wisely and well. They have been related at length in recent days, and need no re-telling here. But every musician knows that the services of a great teacher which are not spectacular, which are not widely heralded in the press and eulogized by this and that commentator, are often the greatest if the least visible work that he does. In a hundred ways not connected with the success of a Heifetz or Zimbalist, an Elman or Parlow or Hansen or any one of dozens of other names familiar to concert goers, Mr. Auer has advanced the cause of music. Violinists whose names do not head concert programs in the different countries of the world have been made substantial musicians, teachers and forces for good in the community by him. He has contributed invaluable to the pedagogical literature of his instrument. He has been a great musician as well as a specialist upon an instrument, and a man of parts and of notable contacts, aside from his rank and associations as a musician. It was to Auer the man as well as musician that the audience paid homage.

In the second half of the program, which extended far into the night, Mr. Heifetz played Auer's "Romanze," Joseph Achron's "Pensée de L. Auer," and Auer's "Tarantelle de Concert," to the piano accompaniment of none other than Mr. Zimbalist; Mr. Hofmann played as piano solos Chopin's F sharp minor Polonaise, Tchaikovsky's "Berceuse," and the Wagner-Liszt "Liebstod" from "Tristan und Isolde," and Mr. Heifetz and Mr. Zimbalist, with Paul Stassievitch as accompanist, concluded the concert with the double violin concerto of J. S. Bach. A series of notable performances, in which Mr. Auer's colleagues showed the sincerity of their homage as this feeling could not have been shown in words. Nor must Paul Stassievitch's accompaniment of Vivaldi and Bach, undertaken at short notice, be forgotten. They were the accomplishments of an uncommonly equipped musician.

This concert was a brilliant event. Over 500 were turned away from the box office when all seats and available standing room had been purchased. Receipts were said to be about \$20,000. At the last there were repeated calls for Mr. Auer. It was announced that he had left the hall to rest from the excitement of the evening, with fervent acknowledgments to all who had taken part in his birthday celebration.