

Rachmaninoff Gives Advice

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Sergei Wassilievitch Rachmaninoff is a man of much thought but little talk. The pianist-composer will walk around many blocks to keep from meeting an interviewer. But after his concert at the public auditorium Monday night, the great artist was introduced to a timid reporter. The visitor frowned.

"What do you want to know, what do you want to know? Ask me some questions," said Dr. Rachmaninoff, hurrying into his overcoat.

"At what age should a child start piano lessons?" was asked.

Early Start Advised

"I started at 4," replied the pianist, who was born in Novgorod, Russia, on April 2, 1873. "That is quite young. Perhaps all cannot start at 4. But they should begin as young as possible."

"And how long should a child practice each day?" was inquired of Dr. Rachmaninoff, who received his doctor's degree from the University of Nebraska.

"One hour a day at first," came the stern reply, "not too much in the beginning. As you get older, more practice. But it is best to go slower at first, you must not get too tired."

Question Repeated

The great pianist was then asked which one of the great masters of music the youngster should play at the beginning. But Dr. Rachmaninoff didn't seem to care for this one.

"That is not important," he replied quickly, "the most important thing is the right place of the hand."

He then took off his glove and put out his hand, and illustrated the proper position of the fingers. But the question about the first master to play was repeated.

Hands First Thought

"I don't know, perhaps Mozart, perhaps not," the composer who enjoys poetry declared. "You must think of the hands first, you must be sure this is correct. It is like churning, you must do it well and proper or the result is bad."

Dr. Rachmaninoff is perhaps better known as a composer than as a soloist. But he said he couldn't compose while on tour. Concertos don't harmonize with bumping switch engines nor preludes with clicking car wheels. He reads poetry while traveling, Poe being his favorite American verse-maker.

More Music Needed

Putting his glove back on, the artist said, "Learning the position of the hand is difficult, but it is very important."

And then Dr. Rachmaninoff was asked a question that made him forget the position of the hands—"Has there been enough good music written?"

"No, no, it is never enough," he almost shouted. "For bad things, there is enough; for good things, not enough, never enough!"