

Abonnementspreis: In Frankfurt am Main...

(Frankfurter Handelszeitung.)

und Handelsblatt. Begründet von Leopold Sonnemann.

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Erstes Geheiligt vom Frau Zilla Durieux: 'Agnes und kein Ding' von Friedrich Heibel.

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Erstes Geheiligt vom Frau Zilla Durieux: 'Agnes und kein Ding' von Friedrich Heibel.

Short Feature.

[Frankfurt Museum Concert. Mr. Serge Rachmaninoff (Moscow), who yesterday at the Frankfurt Museum performed his Piano Concerto No. 3 in D minor for the first time in Frankfurt, is one of the most remarkable among the younger Russian composers. A refined, intelligent mind, and at the same time a spirited musical temperament, he particularly reveals the dreamy, elegiac traits of Slavic nature and combines these lyrical gifts with an intellect of considerable sharpness, an artistic sensibility of delicate sensitivity. But these very qualities, however commendable they are in themselves, prove more detrimental than beneficial in his new piano concerto. Rachmaninoff undoubtedly intended here to avoid the concertante character of the virtuoso piece and to create a kind of symphonic dialogue between piano and orchestra. He also succeeded in expressing this intention in the first two movements and in creating a score that is at least captivating in its conception and structure. However, even here the themes lack the clear, three-dimensional character that remains indispensable for the development of the concerto form, and indeed for the symphonic. The musical organization shows a fine, firm structure, yet it remains mollusc-like and indistinct; it dissolves. Perhaps a powerfully concluding finale could have given the lyrical opening movements the necessary counterweight, retrospectively justifying them. But this concluding section only emphasizes the weaknesses of the preceding ones. Mood follows mood, episode follows episode, and a subtle plot unfolds. One cannot help but feel that the composer lost his way here, and now, from a mosaic of ideas, constructs a tiringly long-winded and verbose finale. Rachmaninoff wrote better, but perhaps we will yet see a reworking of this piece, which yesterday, thanks to the composer's exceptionally nuanced performance, was warmly received. The unfavourable placement of the long piano concerto after Mahler's "Kindertotenlieder" may have contributed to the premature waning of interest. Mr. Harrison, who has already made a name for himself here with a recital, performed the songs with a well-trained and expansive voice, but with somewhat less expressive character. Why not, instead of these agonizingly oppressive pieces, which had already been presented in the opera house concert with a far more poetically rich orchestral accompaniment, some of Mahler's magnificently distant Wunderhorn songs, Brahms's "Tragic Overture," and Beethoven's Eighth Symphony form the opening and closing sections of the program? Mr. Mengelberg performed both works with his characteristic rhythmic rigor and was rewarded with enthusiastic applause at the end. Opinions may differ as to how well this metronomic exaltation is suited to clarifying the conceptual flow of a Brahmsian work or even to fully exploiting the poetic richness of a Beethoven symphony. Certainly, however, the conductor's highest task does not lie so much in ensuring precise interplay between the instruments—that is a basic technical requirement for any musical exercise. Rather, for conductors, who are spiritual guides, to use Liszt's now-classic term "helmsmen," no "Rowing servants" – as they wish to be, primarily focused on subtlety and freedom in the modelling of the phrase, on consciously shaping and animating the multifaceted orchestral apparatus, on bringing to life the lifeless sonic gesture, on recognizing and convincingly, inwardly sweepingly reliving the event that took place within the artist during the creative process. Mr. Mengelberg's conducting style does not originate from this spiritual core of the work, but rather from the notation of the score, which he translates with strict precision into syllable values, to which he gives a strong rhythmic framework and the melodic contour of the original. But despite all his mastery over this mechanism, the heartbeat of the living organism blossoming from within is missing! One would have to examine every note of the Overture and the Symphony, analyse them for their poetic and musical significance, compare how they sound in the

imagination with how they actually sounded yesterday, and would ultimately arrive at the realization that something indefinable was missing, something that could only be felt in the end, but could scarcely be specified in words. -P. B.

[Translation: Google]