



## MUSIC

### JEWISH MUSIC CIRCLE IN ANTWERP

#### Sergei Rachmaninoff's keyboard evening

Once again, this concert association adds another glorious evening to its resume. Until now, little more than his name—and that solely in connection with his well-known Prelude for Piano—has reached us regarding Rachmaninoff. This Russian keyboard artist, following the example of most of his compatriots and also a composer of significance, nevertheless belongs to the representative figures in the universal realm of virtuosity. As such, he has long been highly regarded in the old and new world. It was reserved for this occasion to the Jewish Music Circle to introduce him personally to the Antwerp audience.

The main weight of Rachmaninoff's program undeniably lay in the first part. Schubert's Andante, varied by Tausig, amounted to little more than a polite introduction, with no dissent. We focused on Schumann's "Davidsbündler" and wondered what this would become, while we sought to dissect the stone head of the resolute master. And behold, a row of stone statues passed us by; musically strongly chiselled groups formed, objectively elaborated and carrying within them the power thereof.

Between Rachmaninoff and his interpretation lies a distance that is not estrangement, but merely opens up a space allowing the artist to control the line, which must speak for itself. There is a kind of rigor in the gaze with which Rachmaninoff views his own interpretation, not because he fears it will not obey him, but to safeguard it from fleeting whims and accidental deviations. A play in which one does not wish it to be otherwise, since it could not, in that case, yield what it has to offer in its pursuit of truth.

The same characteristics could be observed in both of Chopin's Scherzi, the one in B and the one in B flat minor. Specific refinements of interpretation remain alien to this robust artist. The particular must yield to the general, the narrower to the broader, of which Rachmaninoff proves himself a convinced proponent.

The second part presented us with three Etudes of the artist's own composition. We admit that they passed too quickly to have followed each of them at their beginning and end. Part of the blame for this lay with the incorrect listing of the notes on the programme, which did not correspond to what was performed. When the Liszt pieces began, we only then realized where we had left off!

Rachmaninoff is certainly a brilliant Liszt player. His performance of the Pesth Carnival proved it in a resounding manner. Extra pieces followed, including the well-known Prelude by Rachmaninoff himself. The applause only ended when the master himself returned to the piano once more, this time to slip the lid down protectively over the weary keys.

L.O.

[Translation: Google]