

Concerts

For many pianists, Bach seems only good enough in arrangements; his original piano compositions simply don't allow for thunderous parallel octaves. Even Serge Rachmaninoff, who played on February 12th in the rather well-equipped Tonhalle concert hall, judging from his performance, is unfamiliar with Bach's original D minor Organ Toccata, otherwise he wouldn't have kept Prestissimo and Allegro the same, or omitted fermatas and broken harmonies. The world-famous pianist was considerably more objective with Beethoven's D major Sonata, Op. 10. While his rendition of the first movement lacked a more refined stylistic approach, the Largo was beautifully expressed, the minuet even more finely captured, and the Rondo, played with a restrained, yet moving touch. With Chopin's B-flat minor Sonata, Rachmaninoff then entered his element; the great pianist, capable of passionate expression and complete devotion, was now on full display. His polished technique demanded admiration; performance and work were perfectly aligned. Rachmaninoff also impressed pianistically in his rendition of one of his many preludes, one with bell ostinati, though less so with his intellectually weak Oriental Sketch. With Liszt, in "Liebestraum" and "Waldesrauschen," Valse oubliée, and Rhapsody No. 11, the listeners' admiration rightly reached a level that elicited encores (Chopin's Nocturne in F-sharp major, Wagner-Liszt's Spinnlied, Kreisler-Rachmaninoff's Liebesleid) the necessary level of enthusiasm. [...]

[Translation: Google]