



While awaiting the return of Mr. Pierre Monteux, who is due to resume his duties at the podium of the Paris Opera Orchestra next Sunday, the Salle Pleyel continues to host distinguished conductors. Within three days, Mr. Horenstein, the young director of the Düsseldorf Opera, and Mr. Vladimir Golschmann, whose first concert I missed at the very beginning of the season, have taken turns on the podium. Now that's what I call a busy weekend!

Mr. Horenstein, for his part, had accepted the perilous task of performing, with the composer himself at the piano, the Fourth Piano Concerto, apparently quite recent, by Mr. Sergei Rachmaninoff. A selflessness bordering on heroism, for you could not imagine anything more insipid, anything more "cool," than this bland torrent of notes that pours forth for half an hour, and which we must endure, alas! for the redemption of our sins. The audience, which has long since devoted a solid cult to Mr. Rachmaninoff, swallows its disappointment without too much resentment, perhaps without quite grasping how one can be both a prestigious pianist and a deplorable composer; but it does not insist on demanding, as is customary, the famous Prelude as an encore.

Moreover, Mr. Rachmaninoff, with perfect nonchalance, had taken care to make him understand that he would not return to the piano under any pretext, since he had the stool removed as soon as the last chord was played, and the instrument closed, no doubt in case he was begged to play standing up... Let him rest assured for the future: we have heard him quite enough, and we leave him plenty of time to change his repertoire.

It is virtuosos like Mr. Rachmaninoff who wreak havoc on music. With their fabulous fees, they bleed the societies that hire them dry and corrupt the faith of the average listener, to such an extent that the resources of both are reduced to a minimum when it comes to making an effort for true art. People of this kind deserve nothing but hemlock. Let them drink it, and let's not speak of it again. In any case, within a fortnight of each other, *The Bells* and the Fourth Concerto: we have had our fill, and for many years to come, of this kind of nonsense. Fortunately, Mr. Horenstein's task was not limited to pleading his case, as presented to us in Richard Strauss's *Death and Transfiguration*, and, once the vain fumes of the Concerto had dissipated, he had the last word in the matter by delivering a truly irreproachable performance of Beethoven's Seventh Symphony. His bearing, which in some respects, by its eloquent simplicity, evokes that of Mr. Arturo Toscanini, is of the kind that impresses both the orchestra and the audience. His gesture is expressive, his style of absolute purity. In Strauss, he knows how to draw from the muted quartet effects of penetrating mystery, and unleashes the most vehement storms at just the right moment. In Beethoven, he maintains the rhythm imperturbably and develops the conclusion of the finale with increasing breadth, reaching a most moving climax. Perhaps he could have accentuated certain pianissimos more, although he risked being hampered in establishing them by an unfamiliar acoustic. Nevertheless, we are dealing with one of the most brilliant conductors in Central Europe, and we can rely on his dedication to championing French works, to which we know he dedicates a significant portion of his programs.

[Translation: Google]