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WASHINGTON POST
and TIMES HERALD
February 22, 1958

By Paul Hume

The evening's guest artist was Sigurd Rascher, the saxophone virtuoso.

Rascher is dean of today's classical saxophone players, and his performance is phenomenal.

Saxophonist Rascher Enlivens Recital

By IRVING LOWENS

Last night's concert of unusual music for unusual combinations of instruments presented by the Krasner Chamber Music Ensemble at the Library of Congress got into high gear with the appearance, after the intermission, of guest artist Sigurd Rascher. He is probably the best-known exponent of the saxophone as a serious instrument in the world today.

Mr. Rascher was head first in a piece by the contemporary Danish composer Jorgen Bentzon, written for the really weird combination of flute, saxophone, bassoon and double bass. The soloist prefaced the charming but slightly prolix work with a disarming explanation of how it came about. Mr. Rascher, as a saxophonist, was always left out of things so he asked his friend, Bentzon, to write a piece for him. Flute, bassoon and double bass were also available—and thus Rascher got his piece, which obviously cannot be performed anywhere, anytime, at the drop of a hat.

The audience greeted the Bentzon with marked enthusiasm, but really warmed up after the reading of the Jacques Ibert Concertino for saxophone and 11 instruments. Oddly enough, this offbeat piece was played only last week in Constitution Hall by Munch and the Boston Symphony Orchestra with Marcel Mule in the featured role. But, as Rascher pointed out, yesterday's reading was the "original" and Munch's was the arrangement. Rascher should know, as Ibert wrote the Concertino for him.

The Ibert is a regular French cream puff, and Rascher plays it for all it is worth. The audience, astounded by the soloist's unbelievable mastery over the saxophone demanded and got a repetition of the last movement. Not satisfied; they brought Mr. Rascher back for an additional pair of encores before they let him go.



Charlotte—Sings—Not Wails

CHARLOTTE (N. C.) NEWS—JANUARY 9, 1958

By EDWIN S. BERGAMINI

Sigurd Rascher, who beguiled and delighted his Central audience with his eloquence on an instrument usually played with anything but real eloquence, might best be described as a singer on the saxophone. This singing quality, and a purity of artistic intent, are what distinguish Rascher's work as musician and instrumentalist.

For the opening musical event this season at Charlotte College, it was an auspicious beginning. And for the saxophone, Rascher's remark remains: "what you want it to do, the saxophone gives you." Adolph Sax, who created it as a concert instrument over a century ago, has a formidable advocate for his invention today in Sigurd Rascher.

Syracuse—

SYRACUSE, N. Y. — February 19, 1958

Ill Winds Fail to Daunt Artist's Woodwind Mastery

By WILLIAM FLEMING

The show must go on. The winds must get through. And the concert must be played. In this spirit an audience of some 150 intrepid and dauntless souls gathered last evening in the Museum of Fine Arts to hear the Krasner Chamber Music Ensemble, featuring Sigurd Rascher, saxophonist extraordinary.

Jacques Ibert's "Chamber Concerts" for saxophone and 11 instruments was the chosen vehicle for Rascher's all-too-brief appearance. Rascher plays the saxophone as an instrument in its own right. Yet his amazing command

of its color qualities give it, as he wills, the silky sonority of a viola, the poignant timbre of a clarinet, or the pungent sound of the oboe.

Complete mastery of any instrument is rare in the annals of art, yet Rascher has that mastery. The Ibert Concerto—a work commissioned by and dedicated to the soloist—is a rather brash and brittle work of the modern Paris school. Its witty urbanities and syncopated rhythms come perilously close to being banalities. But playing of such distinction rises above the limitations of the composition.

Cleveland-

CLEVELAND PLAIN DEALER, APRIL 18, 1958

Sax Soloist Scores Firsts With Orchestra

By HERBERT ELWELL

Three "firsts" in one program made for an exceptionally interesting evening last night at Severance Hall, where the Cleveland Orchestra under George Szell gave its next-to-last symphony concert of the season.

The celebrated saxophonist Sigurd Rascher was responsible for introducing two of the works new to this audience. This was his first appearance here, in fact the first time a saxophone had ever been heard as solo instrument with the orchestra. So far as can be determined, no ears were shattered by this novelty of sound.

The fact is that Rascher is a remarkable virtuoso, who performs with such refined musicianship that he makes this instrument actually sound distinguished. He injects his playing with a kind of variety of color and expressiveness that remove the sax entirely from the jazz band category.

Perfect Display Works

The serious repertoire for the instrument is not large, but the two works he performed were perfect for displaying the instrument's best qualities within the framework of music with quality.

They were Debussy's Rhapsody for Orchestra and Saxophone and Ibert's Concertino da Camera for Saxophone and Small Orchestra. The first was typical Debussy, with typical whole tone patterns and a sensitive feeling for the expressive capacities of the solo instrument combined with rich orchestral sounds.

The second was even more favorable to exploitation of the solo, which was assigned innumerable melodic curlicues and twists, as well as some extremely high notes for an E flat sax. It was all delightfully entertaining, and the audience showed its pleasure.

CLEVELAND NEWS, FRIDAY, APRIL 18, 1958

Rascher Saxophone Puts Sheen on Szell Concert

By ETHEL BOROS

Sigurd Rascher, famed saxophone player, provided some unusual moments last night in Severance Hall. Rascher was making his first appearance with the Cleveland Orchestra and his second appearance under the baton of George Szell.

Rascher used an E flat alto saxophone, commonly played in jazz orchestras, but no jazz player ever made such heavenly music with his instrument. Rascher played with a tone so delicately transparent, with such damask sheen, such impeccable musicianship, that one

felt strongly here was a new kind of instrument.

A reduced orchestra accompanied him in Debussy's "Rhapsody for Orchestra and Saxophone," and Ibert's "Concertino da Camera for Saxophone and Small Orchestra," the latter specially written for him.

Both pieces have a clarity, melodious charm and the aim of showing the saxophone at its mellowest. After hearing this masterful performance it is easy to understand Rascher's devotion to the instrument.

THE CLEVELAND PRESS, Friday, Apr. 18, 1958

Rascher's Sax Is Brilliant

By FRANK HRUBY

Music Critic

Q: When is a saxophone not a saxophone?

A: When it is played by Sigurd Rascher.

Yet at the concert by the Cleveland Orchestra last night it looked just like one and was handled like one. The difference lay in the utter ease and smoothness with which Rascher drew forth his tones and tunes.

His tunes were by Debussy and Ibert: Rhapsody for Orchestra and Saxophone and "Concertino da Camera" for Alto Saxophone and Small Orchestra, respectively.

Rascher long has been known for his accomplishments in making the saxophone a respectable instrument for serious musical purposes.

Debussy's work sounds as though he were reluctant to write it, for it is full of sounds from his other works.

Ibert's Concertino, on the other hand, dedicated to Rascher, explores the many facets of the instrument, utilizing the full sax range.

Neither piece has been heard at these concerts before. Their inclusion is a welcome addition to the local repertory.

New York-

THE NEW YORK TIMES, JANUARY 6, 1958.

Saxophonist Heard at Chamber Concert

SIGURD RASCHER, one of the few saxophonists known primarily for his work in serious music, appeared as guest artist with the Chamber Music Circle late yesterday afternoon in Carnegie Recital Hall.

He took part in two modern chamber works, Stravinsky's "Pastorale" and "Racconto," Op. 25, of Jorgen Bentzon, which was composed in Copenhagen at the suggestion of the saxophonist.

A third work in which Mr. Rascher took part was an unpublished Trio Sonata by a little known contemporary of Bach, Jan Dismas Zelenka.

Mr. Rascher's saxophone playing in the oboe range sounded rather like a cross between a clarinet and a flute and so blended admirably with the ensemble. He showed his familiar artistry in his sensitive phrasing and rhythmic vitality.

CHARLOTTE OBSERVER Thursday, Jan. 9, 1958

Artist's Saxophone

By DICK BANKS
Observer Arts Editor

Sigurd Rascher plays the saxophone like nobody you ever heard.

When he plays, the wailing, groaning, and generally hysterical noises of the average saxophone are happily unheard.

He hits a note on the button—doesn't slide into it like a big-leaguer digging into second base.

"The Paganini of the saxophone" appeared in a concert Wednesday night on the Charlotte College artist series.

Some years ago at the Academy of Music at Stuttgart, Germany, Rascher was an accomplished young clarinetist. He had to play the sax to pay his way, and found that it had latest possibilities as a concert instrument, with a range of four full octaves.

His tone has remarkable purity, occasionally in its lightness like a flute, often briary like an oboe, at times reminiscent of the English horn. His middle register has an especially golden sound.