

RACHMANINOFF RECITAL THRILLS

A torrential spirit, truly a revolutionnaire in art, is Rachmaninoff, the great composer-pianist out of Russia, whose playing absorbs and thrills, while commanding the highest admiration for his power as a technician and for the deep musicianship that underlies it.

And Rachmaninoff the composer, as well as Rachmaninoff the great pianist, were amply represented in the vitally interesting program he gave at his second recital at the National Theater yesterday afternoon, presented by Mrs. Wilson-Greene.

What is it that animates the spirit of this man? Master intellect, master dramatist, he sways and sweeps his music along with a force and dynamic power in which there is no peace. It is vital, vibrant, virile. His daintiest of little runs are like tiny torrents. His tone is biting, crisp. His prestos driven tempestuously and executed with remarkable articulation. Acrid, strident he often makes his dramatic stories in tone.

But then—as in his own D minor "Prelude," the second in his group of three—he suddenly presents the quiet spaces of his native snow-covered land, with its scene of sleigh bells, its passing touch of village dance, and then the open and quiet and spagy.

"Scene," one might call his musical fancies, and with what amazing variety and life, delicacy, color, tone, he depicts them. The two Strauss-Tausig Waltzes! The "Voices of the Forest" was quite a program in itself. In it he evokes the wood voices in a real dissertation in tone, bell-like, fairy-like, tempestuous, anarchic—while his finger work in the second waltz and in the Scarlatti-Tausig "Caprice" was pianistic and exquisitely executed.

So much there is in content in his interpretations, and in ever varied rhythm over which he has such command. It was surprising to hear his Hadyn "Variations"—their joy, lightness, and feeling execution, seeming the very antithesis of the man. His Beethoven Thirty-two Variations—each one a type—were rugged as the great master. In them, his transitions, his modulations, were remarkable. Not a single shade or note is lost in a modulation—the creative artist as well as the player. One hears all in and through the harmonic texture remarkably.

But to Rachmaninoff, the composer again. There was the "Polichinelle" (by request), a brusque scene, with a mellowed romance interlude—crude jollity, humor, sentiment, and temperament. His "Mélodie," a "Humoresque," marked by individuality and zyncopation, and then the preludes. The G sharp minor, restless, harsh, sweeping. The essentially Russian D minor. Then the unknown C sharp minor (by request), massive, with repose—one notes that he does not "velvet" the final chords, but "bites" them out. It is as his own G minor "Prelude," a prelude militaire, that he played at the conclusion of his program.

List's second "Rhapsodie"—orchestral, strident, then cymbal clear. These reminiscent, almost incidental have notes. His own cadenza almost whimsically brought out Russian color, and with amazing tonalities, raucous, fairy-like, exquisite, distorted—and back to a remarkable presto.

Recalled again and again, it was after many of the audience, had left that he played his G minor "Prelude" as a second encore, following the Tchaikowsky "Troika." His first encore was a "Nocturne," by Philéas and he played the Chopin E minor Waltz.

A. Lincoln in rugged form and un-

swerving personality, Rachmaninoff brings new vision and new life into music.
J MacB.

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