

# MUSIC.

By RICHARD ALDRICH.

## Mr. Rachmaninoff's Recital.

The kind of piano playing that Mr. Serge Rachmaninoff offered at his recital yesterday afternoon in Carnegie Hall is valuable on account of its sanity, its fidelity to the composers whose interpreter he made himself, its self-effacement of the executant. There is no "sensation" in his appearance, his actions at the piano, his "readings." There is nothing to be derived from it except delight in the music he plays, consequent upon his clear penetration into its significance and his sympathy with it; and the large audience that heard him evidently derived that kind of delight from the recital.

Mr. Rachmaninoff's large technical powers are not of the kind that dazzle nor press themselves into the foreground. Neither is he remarkable beyond many others for the variety or sensuous beauty of his tone, which has the beauty and warmth of a crystalline clearness and an apt dynamic adjustment to the attainment of the effects he wishes. What distinguishes his performance particularly is his grasp of the larger proportions and the significance of details in their relation to the whole; his synthesis, rather than analysis, of the vital elements that go to make up a great composition.

Thus was distinguished his playing of Beethoven's D minor sonata, the second in the set of three, Op. 31; a performance that presented no problems but was beautifully poised and lucid, setting forth unmistakably the composer's purpose. There was the same fidelity to the spirit, so widely differing, of Mendelssohn's "Rondo Capriccioso," whereof Mr. Rachmaninoff made no attempt to renovate the grace, a little dim and old-fashioned; also of a group of Chopin's music, in which he found the passion and the sentiment unclouded, and the "Marche Funébre" of Alkan, whose effects do not go very deep. He also played a waltz and an etude of his own and Liszt's transcription of the waltz song in "Faust."

*The New York Times*

Published: October 20, 1919

Copyright © The New York Times