

RACHMANINOFF RECITAL

A VIRTUOSO OF RARE MUSICIANSHIP

By F. BONA VIA

There was a full and enthusiastic house for Sergei Rachmaninoff's recital at Queen's Hall on Saturday.

He deserves no less, for while, on the one hand, his playing is technically as finished as that of any pianist now before the public, consummate musicianship gives to his interpretations a symmetry and order rare in virtuosos of all kinds, but almost unique among piano virtuosos.

Mr. Rachmaninoff's phrasing is never that of the musician who is a law unto himself. It is rather that of the chamber music player and of the orchestral player, that is to say, of the musicians whose work is made possible only by the unquestioning acceptance of the rhythmic laws.

In the gracious Italian concerto of Bach strict adherence to rhythm was not specially striking for the excellent reason that no responsible player has ever taken liberties with Bach. It was quite evident in Chopin's scherzo in C sharp minor and outstanding in the last movement of Beethoven's sonata in D minor (op. 31, No. 2).

Clear logic does not stand in the way of poetic feeling and expression. There was austerity in most things Rachmaninoff played, but the Chopin nocturne he gave as an encore could not have been imbued with a finer, more poetic sense.