

Rachmaninoff Scores Anew In Concert

By Mollie Merrick

Size and accoustical faults in The Auditorium are minimized to a mere scratch on the surface of our pleasure when Rachmaninoff and Fritz Kreisler play: these two artists seem to have a carrying power, a resonance, which makes even those seated back at the door, aware of the various qualities of the work they are interpreting.

The vast hall was filled to the last inch when the Russian genius played yesterday afternoon. He gave a somewhat different program but played it in his characteristic manner. His tall stooped form suggested a weariness that was alien to the tremendous energy of his fingers. The traces of experience and years on the countenance again belied by the whimsical keenness of his eyes. He was ready to play encores for the throng that surged about the platform some 70 minutes after he opened the concert, for he eliminated the trips on and off stage between numbers, once the audience was settled.

Schubert in Opening

Schubert, in the Tausig transcription, opened the program with the Andantino and Variations, and Schubert, in the Liszt arrangement of "The Wanderer," followed it. Brahms, in the Intermezzo and Ballade, fitted in well. Superlative chord work and such pedalling as no other artist gives characterized the afternoon throughout.

More than any other artist playing today, Rachmaninoff makes you realize that the piano is the entire orchestra. It is a remarkable left hand in its searching quality—reaching out for little phrases overlooked by the average pianist and stressing them with telling effect. The independence of the hands is phenomenal.

Assertive Character

He did not descend to mere prettiness even in the Chopin Waltz, which was given a personality of more assertive character than the conventional interpretation. But his Chopin is not of the same timbre as Brailowsky, or even Lhevinne or Cortot. It is not so thin. There is not that sweet fluting, that delicious tinkly shallowness that is peculiar to the Polish composer. Rachmaninoff gives him more dimension and in another way.

The Rakoczy March, which reveals one of his most telling angles of art, came at the conclusion of the program. Medtner's "Fairy Tales" and a Rachmaninoff Prelude were contained in the second half of the program.