

RACHMANINOFF BRILLIANT IN PIANO RECITAL

Gamut From Delicacy to Power
Run by Russian Artist; Work
Applauded by Capacity House

By ALEXANDER FRIED.

Even if he were not great as a musician, it would still be fascinating to hear Sergei Rachmaninoff at the piano.

He is a perfect keyboard craftsman. His playing is relaxed, natural, easy. Yet it runs a clean vast gamut of effect, from delicacy to a majestic power.

In the first of two Memorial Opera House recitals last night, the tall dour Russian was greeted with admiration by a capacity audience.

He will offer a new program tomorrow afternoon.

SELF-POSSESSED.

Sometimes, last night, Rachmaninoff's efficiency cooled his eloquence. His playing became too self-possessed, even when it was brilliantly complex and rapid. It was so well controlled that it lost emotional fury.

This was by no means always the case. Among twelve Chopin "Preludes," only one or two were given cursory treatment. But the B minor reflected a warm inner poetry. The E flat major sang forth with rhapsodic freedom. The G minor plunged into an exciting, savage passion.

Whatever he may play, Rachmaninoff never fails in expressive taste. His touch sparkled intimately in some A minor "Variations" of old Rameau. He drew out the melody of his own G major "Prelude" in a firm pure lyric line. His rhythm in Liszt's "Tarantella" had a leonine precision.

His major single offering was Beethoven's Sonata Opus 81 ("Farewell, Absence, Return"). The most absorbing movement was the second, with its tender remembrances of the dear departed.

ROMANTIC ARDOR.

Performances of Schubert's A flat "Impromptu" and D major "Rondo" were held a little too strictly at finger's length, as it were. (Except that the middle part of the "Impromptu" was played with a splendid verve.) Thus Schubert's true folk songfulness became changed into a neat classic sophistication.

A memorable passage of the recital was Liszt's "Sonnet of Petrarch." It glowed with romantic ardor; its rhetoric was monumental. Bach was represented by the E minor "Toccat." After the regular program, I have no doubt, came eagerly demanded encores.