

## Audience Thrilled By Rachmaninoff Piano Recital

### *Beethoven Sonata Proves Highlight Of Concert*

By ALEXANDER FRIED

Times otherwise change vastly. But within the Memorial Opera House yesterday afternoon there took place a musical scene that was exactly and unalterably what it might have been one or thirty years ago.

A lank dour figure of a man, with bent broad shoulders and close cropped head, stepped from the wings and slowly half stumbled toward an open piano in the center of the stage. His appearance was the signal for quick and reverent acclaim from a capacity audience.

Needless to say, the lank sleepy eyed master was the unique Sergei Rachmaninoff. And needless to add, his playing held his admirers enthralled.

#### **BEEHOVEN MUSIC.**

Artistically speaking, the climactic thrill of the concert occurred in the very second number: Beethoven's Sonata Opus 111.

What incomparable music Beethoven's final Sonata is! It has majesty without rhetoric. Its sentiment and tenderness transcend the common world. It is fresh and inventive and ageless. Rachmaninoff's performance of it was unforgettable.

Earlier the Russian-American veteran had played Mozart's A major "Variations." His fingers made every simple or elaborate pattern of the work exquisitely crisp and glowing. More coloristic and poetical was the beauty of Schumann's F sharp minor "Nocturne."

Thereafter Rachmaninoff made a mistake by occupying quite a half of his program with transcriptions.

#### **SONG RECITALS.**

Why search out transcriptions when the original piano repertory just bulges with fine music that is too rarely heard? The idea of offering eight song arrangements in a row was especially unfortunate. Our music schedules nowadays are overbalanced with song recitals as it is.

In any case Rachmaninoff— from the viewpoint of sheer keyboard craftsmanship — handled magnificently his own setting of Bach's E major Violin "Partita" and various excessively florid settings (by Liszt, Tausig and Rachmaninoff) of songs by himself, Schubert, Schumann, Chopin, Tschalkovsky and Kreisler. Encores followed.