

# Rachmaninoff Weaves Spell With Pianistic Magic

## Lapses Into Contemplative Mood To Draw From Wide Repertoire A Simple and Effective Recital

By ALICE EVERSMAN.

The magic of Sergei Rachmaninoff's playing again cast its spell over a large audience at Constitution Hall, where he gave a piano recital last evening in the series of evening concerts under the Dorsey management. His program was made up of choice numbers from his wide repertoire without any recourse to popular favorites nor to duplications of what he has given on previous appearances. One can always count on hearing something different in a Rachmaninoff recital and always

the great compositions that can never be heard too often.

Mr. Rachmaninoff's reserve and dignity is so much a part of his personality that they have a charm of their own. But more interesting still is his power to put himself in a contemplative mood from the very beginning and, apart from the atmosphere of a concert hall, weave into his music all the thoughts and ideas so discovered. From that inner realm he sends out music, carefully preparing it for what it must do, and leaves the rest to the listener. And so marvelously wrought are these phrases of beautiful sound that no one can miss nor remain indifferent to their message.

So it was last night. Without any effort toward gaining an effect either by a display of his superb technique or temperamental outbursts of emotion, he played with complete simplicity that carried the greatest power of projection. There is a beautifully insidious quality in all that he does that registers more surely than the apparent emotionalism of other artists.

One felt it at its peak particularly in the poetical presentation of Liszt's "Sonetto del Petrarca," in his own "Prelude in G major" and in the 12 "Preludes" of Chopin which he programmed. In these, Rachmaninoff's originality as an artist and the peculiar character of his pianistic talent shone supreme. His command of polyphony, his clear insight into the reason of a phrase and the trueness of his style are more important than his facile and sparkling technique.

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Two rarely heard works, Rameau's "Variations" and Beethoven's "Sonata, opus 81," were among the first numbers he played. Joined with the Bach "Tocatta in E minor," they gave the artist the occasion for demonstrating his fine feeling for purity of line and classic dignity. The three movements of the Beethoven sonata, "Les Adieux," "L'Absence" and "Le Retour," do not quite live up to the romantic titles nor are they Beethoven in his freest and most inspired moments. Parts of the second movement and the

third are loosened from a certain restraint while the first is chiefly interesting for its treatment of the short initial theme.

Twelve of the Chopin "Preludes," played with exquisite care, and Schubert's delightful "Impromptu" and "Rondo" completed the program. Except, of course, for the encores for which almost the entire audience waited. And the beloved Rachmaninoff "Prelude" was among them, greeted with spontaneous applause at the sounding of its first ponderous chords. Incidentally, how different and how full of color is the composer's playing of it, something that should be noted by many who essay it.

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