

MUSIC

Rachmaninoff Recital

That Russian sorcerer of the piano, Sergei Rachmaninoff, opened the University Artists course last night with a program that ranged from introspective Beethoven to dulcet bits of melody purveyed with all the lusciousness of the Slav pianist's art.

Meat of the program at Northrop auditorium was the opening group starting with the familiar A major variations of Mozart, reaching a peak in Beethoven's last piano sonata, the opus 111, and concluding with the Bach violin partita in E major arranged by Rachmaninoff for piano.

Dark coloring and mysterious shading envelop a Rachmaninoff program, regardless of the composer expounded, so that Mozart's sunny music is paled over with ~~doubt and questioning, and Bach~~ emerges with a Russian accent. Quite in Rachmaninoff's moody style, however, was the long confessional of the second movement of Beethoven's opus 111, which the pianist related with obvious sympathy for its extended phrases and introspective character.

The program's second half was an unconventional collection of songs arranged for piano—a tasty cluster of melodic appetizers in gay and grave styles . . . full of Rachmaninoff's magic, his melting tone, his bittersweet romanticism. The large audience was bewitched by this half-evening of encores; Rachmaninoff apparently has found a way of giving the public what it wants without impairing the dignity of his programs and the integrity of his pianistic art.