

## Today's Music

By Lillian Tyler Plogstedt

Monday evening, in Taft Auditorium, Sergei Rachmaninoff appeared in recital, but a recital of most unusual content. It is five years since this peerless pianist appeared here, then with the symphony orchestra.

Last night, the program contained a number of transcriptions, a form of piano music which is often frowned upon by the musical, shall we say, intelligentsia. It opened with the A major Mozart sonata, or Variations, as it appeared on the program. What can a reviewer say about what Rachmaninoff does with this, or any other composition? We can only sympathize with the countless piano students, who labor over Mozart and never acquire that touch which creates in each measure such ravishing tone coloring.

Then, in tremendous contrast, the Beethoven sonata, op. III, which is fiendishly difficult. Schindler, whom Beethoven commissioned to copy the MSS. asked why he did not write a third movement. To which the composer replied, "The time was too short," but history does not explain this cryptic remark. The closing pages of this great sonata, with their double trills, and tremendous scale passages, were played by Rachmaninoff at the most terrific tempo one can imagine, but with transparent clarity.

The F sharp minor Novelette of Schumann was followed by a magnificent transcription of the Bach E major Partita for violin alone, closing the first half of the program.

The second half consisted entirely of a group of songs arranged for piano; Lilacs, Rachmaninoff's own little gem, as simple as the flower, was changed very little from the score of the song. The Schubert-Liszt "The Trout," the "Serenade," also transcribed by Liszt. "Contrabandiste," a Schumann song with a frightfully difficult arrangement by Tausig, the familiar "Maiden's Wish," Chopin-Liszt, "The Return Home," also Chopin-Liszt, a superb arrangement of Tchaikowsky's lovely "Lullaby," followed by a technically stupendous arrangement, also by Rachmaninoff, of "Liebesfreud," by Kreisler. Needless to say, all of these favorites, played as only a great artist could do, brought demands for encores. Of these there were three; an A minor Mazurka, a composition which was undoubtedly one of his own, and, of course, THE Prelude, after which, an emphatic bang of the piano lid, and an entranced audience left.