

Famous Pianist In Recital

By J. FRED LISSFELT

Rachmaninoff played his first piano recital in several years in Syria Mosque last night, beginning with a sincere and deepfelt rendition of our national anthem and ending with the famous and timeless Prelude in C Sharp Minor, thereby causing great rejoicing in the large audience and quite especially among the many younger patrons.

This grand old Russian is the last of the great romantics and demonstrates his generation's philosophy in every phrase of his playing. As piano playing his performance cannot be excelled, for he has always treated the instrument in a musical way, never in the percussion style of the present; when he writes for the piano he does likewise as so wonderfully exemplified in his own "Tableaux," and his more recent works for orchestra and solo piano. Some may have forgotten that he commands so varied a palette of color when listening to his playing with the orchestra; his brilliance we have taken for granted. And so last night he once again proved himself as sheer piano virtuoso.

NEW ARRANGEMENT

His arrangement of the Bach E Major Partita is a tour de force in the art of arranging, but leaves little of the original Bach to remind us of early eighteenth century music. Likewise in the Beethoven Sonata Opus 31, No. 2, the entire Rachmaninoff approach to Beethoven has changed with the years. Formerly he marked the mosaics of these sonatas with fascinating precision, establishing his credo thus—if Beethoven is the transition from classic to romantic, then I prefer him as classicist. Now, quite the contrary, and we meet Beethoven as a sentimental romantic.

DEVOTION REVEALED

In Schumann's Novelette in F Sharp Minor, Rachmaninoff strikes a deep and exceedingly true note and then continues into his Chopin. His devotion to these two men he carries over into his own works, the four "Tableaux," which, though not reminiscent, and fully imbued with Russian folk melos, show their romantic ancestry. To the Chopin Ballade in F Minor and the Waltz in A Flat Major, without overburdening them with tone, he gives considerable beauty; to the F Sharp Major Nocturne he added nothing new.

Liszt's "Valse Oubliee" came out of less inspired moments, but his voluptuous embellishment of the Petrarch Sonnet, though more dated than any but the great paraphrases among Liszt's piano works, is a tidbit for the colorist and improvisatore. In Rachmaninoff's hands it took on gorgeous proportions as did the final Tarentella. As encore came a Chopin Mazurka and the Prelude.