

FLOODS OF COLOR

Sergei Rachmaninoff is above everything a romanticist, and it was a romantic musical literature that he explored last night. If, in so doing, he left the music reporters more than commonly flabbergasted and embarrassed in the search for words, those who were present will understand why.

For what happened last night is not to be reviewed in the ordinary jargon of concert reporting. The piano splashed great floods of color, exploded into climaxes when Rachmaninoff willed, subsided to the finest hair-line pianissimo, sang, raced, danced and exulted as the inspiration of Beethoven, Chopin, and Liszt demanded. One was brought to the inmost places of the romantic spirit, and seemed to sense in the playing that tortured process whereby the restless searching demon of the romantic evolved itself into shape as music. Which is another way of saying that the performance of a Rachmaninoff is an act of creation scarcely less revealing than the act of composition itself.

TREMENDOUS POWER

Jupiter Pluvius and the Department of Public Works prevented my hearing more than a snatch of the opening Bach. Then came Beethoven, represented by the E Minor Sonata, Opus 109. All that might have been obscure in this work of an unearthly, mysterious period in Beethoven's career came completely to life in Rachmaninoff's fingers, was exposed as logic and feeling and tremendous climactic power.

A group of four works by Chopin were well juxtaposed with the artist's own "Etudes Tableaux," for these are a kind of modern Chopin—capricious, tormented, tragic and gracious by turns, with more than a touch of the heroic accent in their compressed, meaningful brevity. The sentiment of Liszt's second "Sonnetto del Petrarca" and the muscular brilliance of the same composer's transcription of a Paganini etude both were projected with immaculate clarity.