

# BEAUTY OF RACHMANINOFF'S PLAYING

## Famous Pianist- Composer's Cardiff Concert

By OUR MUSIC CRITIC

Rachmaninoff, pianist and composer, was responsible for the whole programme of Sunday night's International Celebrity Concert given in the Empire Theatre, Cardiff. There was a big audience present, expectant and eager, and sympathetic and responsive to a degree.

The programme was varied, ranging from Bach to the composer-pianist himself, and including Beethoven and Chopin, Liszt (several examples), and an attractive arrangement by Brassin of themes from "Die Walküre."

The first impression the pianist gave the audience was the restraint and beautiful clarity of his playing, then his singing tone, the exquisite beauty of the melody, the variety of expression, and the extraordinary completeness of his interpretation of the composers' work which engaged his skill.

### NEW BEAUTIES

Rachmaninoff was the skilled technician through whom each composer spoke, absolutely and charmingly devoid of showmanship. He recorded new beauties in the well-known works. The "Organ Fantasia and Fugue in G Minor" (Bach-Liszt), as performed by the pianist, had such charm that it might well convert many to a real admiration for Bach who, before hearing Rachmaninoff's interpretation and performance, regarded the composer as being interesting to musicians only.

The Beethoven Sonata in D Minor (Op. 31, No. 2) was a remarkably beautiful performance—real Beethoven, and again in the Chopin group there was brilliance and tenderness, poetic beauty and lyricism by turn, and a daintiness rarely heard in Polonaise (C. Minor), Mazurka (F. Minor), Nocturne (D Flat Major), and the Rondo (E Flat). The performance of the Nocturne was a gem of poetic expression, tone, colour and melody, light and shade, full and rich, and attenuated to the ethereal.

### "PRELUDE"

The second part of the programme introduced a new phase with four brilliantly performed études — "Tableaux" (Rachmaninoff), "Liebesträume" (Liszt), an attractive work by Brassin on airs from "Die Walküre," to which the pianist gave orchestral effects, especially in the "Fire Music," and an étude in E major (Paganini-Liszt).

The programme concluded all too soon for the audience, for there had been no encores. Rachmaninoff, with austere dignity, acknowledged the applause, which was followed by a great demonstration, producing three extra items, which included the famous "Prelude," which has been tortured out of shape and burlesqued for its popularity. The audience had the correct conception of its brilliance from the composer, who is surely as great a pianist as ever held an audience in rapture and admiration for his skill and revealing musicianship.