

MUSIC

Rachmaninoff Recital.

During the long reign of Sergei Rachmaninoff as one of the royal family of musicians he has seen pianists pass on the scene and pass off again with painful regularity, but he goes serenely on his way still one of the greatest masters of his instrument this age has produced. The best thing to do when attending one of his recitals is to discard the critical mood and sink with him deep down into the spirit of the music he interprets.

In that way a most delightful and profitable evening will be spent. There is no doubt about the matter for at the present time there is no pianist who more completely represents the ideal performer than he. There is no apparent diminution in his skill as master of the keyboard, without exaggeration he conveys each separate mood; he touches the borderland of every emotion and carries one frequently beyond this borderland into musical and emotional wonders, while one feels constantly the impact of a mind which is rich in those qualities that ennoble even the most obvious phrase.

This quality of intellectuality is perhaps the dominant factor in his interpretations, it is his sure guide into the mysteries of a composer's purposes; he is so sane and yet so intense, so full of poetry with just appreciation of the essence of poetic imagery that he immediately captures the imagination and wins one's respect as he paints in glowing colors what one feels convinced must be the inner spirit of the music.

This does not read like a criticism. I have no intention that it should for this man is one of the very few to whom criticism means little. He is one of those rare characters, who, like Paderewski, exacts our homage and he has it complete and sincere. It is easy to differ from any man on details; but when one conceives the whole, as this performer intends, details have comparatively little significance.

Liszt's "Weeping, Plaints, Sorrows, Fears" as rendered by Rachmaninoff conveyed all that the title of the composition indicates; even if one cares as little for the composition as I do it must be confessed that out of it one caught many a glimpse of the great genius of the man who played it. Under his fingers the well known Italian concerto by Bach developed into a masterpiece of charm with a refined loveliness of tone and feeling that enhanced its inherently simple character.

He was quite as definitely at his ease in a group of Chopin selections, in which he ranged from the most delicate and sensitive fancy to robust and stirring drama. Debussy, too, was not always the dreamer living under the pale light of the moon and indulging in delicate fantasies, for this pianist, for the most part moving in light and shade full of soft and alluring colors that were painted with superlative skill, showed also that the French composer had moments of rugged thinking and could express himself with force and energy.

Out of his own works, Rachmaninoff played the G major study and followed this with others quite as attractive and charming. Concluding he gave with great brilliance and fire the "Voices of the Woods" and "Dance of the Gnomes" by Liszt. These compositions with several encores composed a program that further added to the admiration we have for him as a man and musician.

JAMES DAVIES.