

# Rachmaninoff Relents, Plays His C Sharp Prelude Again

By HELEN BUCHALTER

As faithful as the seasons themselves, Sergei Rachmaninoff returned to Constitution Hall for his annual recital last night, renewing our humble belief that great pianists do their stint without storming the keyboard.

Rachmaninoff, partly because of his status as one of the grand old men of the piano and partly because of the unfortunate popularity of his two famous preludes, is apt to be confused with the bombastic tradition that never had anything to do with great piano playing. As a matter of fact he is a quiet player, so precise and delicate that his fortes have meaning beyond pounding the keyboard.

As for the benighted C sharp minor prelude, that doughty old tour de force turned up as his third encore and since our piano students continue to belabor this piece, we can only hope that those industrious young people were among the thousands who sat enraptured as he played it.

The whole concert was a joy. His technique is unimpaired, as concise, as miraculously clean and flexible as it ever has been. He played Debussy last night—the "Suite Bergamasque"—and it is characteristic of the genuineness of his artistry that Debussy does not infect him with a case of poetic affectation.

The high point of the concert, though, was his playing of Chopin—a selection of four popular works. The "Italian Concerto" of Bach we found less effective; the beautiful "Andante" seemed curiously detached and the presto, taken breathlessly fast, did not come thru with the clarity that marked his playing of Chopin, his own "Etude" and the two Liszt pieces that closed his concert.

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