

SERGEI RACHMANINOFF.

Those who attended the piano recital of Sergei Rachmaninoff in the Brooklyn Academy of Music last night found the famous Russian composer-pianist in rather a bell-cose state of mind. This consummate master of the mechanics of piano playing, who has few peers among virtuosi, sacrificed almost all the subjective demands of the music he presented to emphasize their brilliant external facets. If this end had always been accomplished within the bounds of esthetic tone production, one would not object too vociferously, since even the greatest musicians cannot always find the proper accents to express deeper sentiment. But Mr. Rachmaninoff produced a tone so brittle and of such razor-edged sharpness as to often cause sensitive nerves to quiver in protest.

The Mozart Sonata in D major, with which the player began, was almost vituperous in spirit. The gentle Wolfgang Amadeus might have winced could he have heard it. The ensuing Scarlatti sonatas in D minor and C major were merely exercises in dizzying velocity without musical esprit. Schumann's "Carnaval," lacking all tenderness and intimate poetry, was played at breakneck speed in the rapid episode and not always impeccably.

In the intermission Mr. Rachmaninoff seemed to have become less pugnacious. His Chopin group, consisting of the popular Nocturne in E flat, a waltz in A flat and the G-minor Ballade, showed more consideration for the limitations of the piano. The waltz was gracefully charming and the Ballade, while not overwhelming, displayed some feeling for the mood. The program closed with a Moment-Musical and a glittering transcription of Kreisler's "Liebesfreud" by Mr. Rachmaninoff. Both were played with all the player's great technical resources. Several encores were added and we fled precipitously as the performer struck the first A of his C-sharp minor Prelude.

JEROME BOHM.