



MUSIC

The world's most famed pianist shows us a new facet of his abilities and plays unusual program well

By RUTH HOWELL

RACHMANINOFF played at Poli's yesterday afternoon; it was the same Rachmaninoff, yet it was a different one. He was not the thunderous pianist of his most common repute; neither, on the other hand, was he the dreamer that the songs he writes indicate.

As a technician he was marvelous, superb, perfect; as an interpretative artist, he was true to his most noted characteristic as a pianist—he read the pieces with intellectual interest rather than as an emotionalist.

His tone was beautiful thruout, except in passages where sharp chords found their way into the music. Then it was hard. Rather fortunately, he chose yesterday a program of tuneful, toneful, mostly romantic compositions. His fleet and infallible fingers did justice to every trill and scale; they glided over double notes with thrilling perfection; they paused and dreamed here and there in melodious passages.

Yet most of the master's playing yesterday left one cold within. With much greater ease and more facile technique, the great Russian did not once impart to his listeners any interpretative intensity such as his fellow countryman Horowitz, a less

experienced artist, reveals in the first measures of his playing.

The most amazing thing about the concert was Rachmaninoff playing only Chopin and Liszt numbers. Thus one expected great and rare things. There were great achievements pianistically, but only one or two numbers will be remembered for the feeling they conveyed, unless it were one of satisfaction for the slick playing. Parts of the "Fantasie Impromptu" and the encore Chopin waltz were the best of the Polish composer's works. Two numbers by Liszt, in the last half of the program were superb: the "Va se Impromptu" and the exquisite "Sonnetto Petrarca."

The one thing that seemed least attractive about the artist's playing yesterday was the way he played the pieces by phrases, rather than as unified wholes. Each phrase was lovely, but small portions instead of the whole musical idea caught the attention. It was an unusual thing to do, and not like Rachmaninoff. He used this method mostly in the Chopin numbers, where it is a tempting tendency but not so satisfactory a device to the listener as the ensemble impression.