

Rachmaninoff Recital

FAMOUS PIANIST PLAYS HIS FAMOUS PRELUDE

By Our Music Critic

Sergei Rachmaninoff gave such a complete exposition of the technique of pianoforte playing last night that he deserved a much larger audience than he drew. The half empty hall, however, did not seem to disturb him; he produced his rather charming far back smile for them, and he played with quite superb command.

Rachmaninoff is a curious and very interesting pianist. His own ego is so intense that he seems to write his own name across everything he plays. Yet there is this between Rachmaninoff and other pianists, who exploit personality, that, whereas in the case of others it is an obvious affectation, in Rachmaninoff's case it seems quite sincere. He simply could not play the music any other way. His Chopin was a case in point. He played two of the Scherzos (B minor and B flat minor), and I doubt if anyone in the audience had ever heard them played in such a way before. He flung himself into them with the most intense abandon. In any other pianist we should have called it over-playing.

In the second of the Scherzos he hit the high treble notes so violently that not even the magnificent Steinway he used could stand up to it. He revelled in the dramatic aspect of these superb examples of Chopin at his most fiery, and in so doing phrased them with such impetuosity that they seemed often to be over-running themselves. Yet it was all very exciting and, somehow, one did not feel that violence was being done to

renewed; and also why the issue is so long delayed.

—“Daily Post.”

Chopin—as one certainly would have felt with any other pianist—because Rachmaninoff's own tearing sincerity was so very apparent.

He gave us an unusual programme—a programme, mostly of small things expanded to bursting points. The Schumann “*Dauids-bunderstanze*” was interesting—an unhackneyed “*Carnival*”—but not profound. The Schubert—Tausig “*Andantino and Variations*” is just pianists' music—but then Rachmaninoff is a pianist's pianist—and the remainder of the programme was made up of three rather slight “*Etudes Tableaux*” of his own, and three ultra-Lisztian Liszt compositions, including the famous D flat Etude. There was nothing here to challenge the player's interpretive sense, but everything to exploit his technique, and Rachmaninoff played everything with such a complete degree of accomplishment, and yet without ostentation, that one could not but admire.

Among his encores he played his own famous C sharp minor Prelude, and showed us that, as we have suspected, it is not so much the Prelude as the way it is usually played which is wrong. Curiously enough—or, perhaps, it is not so curious really—this was one of his most restrained performances.

T. J. B.

British Music Society

To-night, Mr. Keith Falkner (vocalist) and Mr. Gordon Green (pianist) give a recital in Rushworth Hall, at 7.45. Mr. Falkner's songs will include early English, a Schubert group of some interesting examples of Japanese folk songs. Mr. Gordon Green is to play the Italian concerto of Bach and a group of modern French and English pieces.