

MUSIC

Rachmaninoff Offers Varied Piano Program At Lyric, Including Chopin And Schubert Works

It would appear that some time still is to elapse before that individual will come who can take away Rachmaninoff's laurels. The pianist made his appearance at the Lyric last night, to an absurdly small house, and in compliment to it, played in some respects better than he ever has played here before. His striking individuality stood out perhaps more sharply than ever.

Rachmaninoff is no romanticist. He is a realist who plays with daring and conviction although he knows always how and where to use the former, and gave no hint of it in his first number, the *Andantino* and Variations of Schubert-Tausig. The great technician has handled the Schubert theme lovingly, almost reverently, employing not a solitary figure that is not in impeccable taste, and Mr. Rachmaninoff played them with tempered reserve.

His exposition of the *Dauidsbuendler* sketches, seldom heard here, was rather extraordinary, highly colored, vivid, the satirical vein prominently stressed, and with many liberties taken with the script. It was enormously effective, if unorthodox, but his free reading has Schumann's own artistic sanction.

From Schumann the pianist turned to Chopin, presenting the two big *Scherzos*, whose key signatures are only a half tone apart, the B minor and B flat minor, but whose contents differ vastly. From this group on the tone-color employed was dazzling. The *sforzando* tones seemed to be shot out of the piano like arrows, straight and deadly sure, and one could almost see them luminous as they hit their marks.

Including the *scherzos*, the balance of the program was a list of enormously difficult studies, the pianist's own *Prelude* in G major and *Etude Tableau* in C minor, Liszt's *Etude* in D flat major, *Valse Impromptu* and the *Carnaval de Pesth*. To the same degree that his pyrotechnics glitter, he is able to assume at will a gentleness and sublime restfulness which are compelling.

Bits of the *scherzos*, of his own prelude and of the *valse* as well as the Gluck-Sgambati *Orpheus*, one of the two encores the audience was able to coax from him, were extremely beautiful. The restless, turbulent Russian was in his element last night, and there is no one else just like him.

H. S. T.