

Music and the Drama

(Conducted by LAWRENCE MASON.)

RACHMANINOFF

Great Russian Pianist Gives Superb Recital in Eaton Auditorium.

Rachmaninoff, master-pianist, regaled a great audience in Eaton Auditorium last night with piano playing such as only a master can command. Enthusiasm ran high, applause was ovational, and the inauguration of the Auditorium concert series was in every way a brilliant success.

The first-period Scriabin sonata, Op. 19, not excessively-modernistic, showed at once the incisive power of the recitalist and gave a refreshingly un-hackneyed start to the evening. The following Haydn number made an amusing contrast, even though it was not played "in period." Indeed, the Scriabine, Haydn, and Schumann selections were all played in one and the same modern style, strangely enough, the Schumann "Fable," with nicely discriminated narrative and embroidery, being the most brilliant achievement in this group. Storms of applause and countless recalls followed.

Beethoven's "Moonlight" sonata was an absorbing study in interpretation. The fatal familiarity of the piece disappeared completely in this searchingly unsentimental reading; and if much that is exquisite was lost, much that is tremendously powerful, usually left quite unexpressed, was here straltingly revealed. In the Presto, for example, which so strikingly parallels the effect of the final Presto in Chopin's "Funeral March" sonata, one felt that the familiar rhythmic figures and the very shapes of the phrases were being altered in the interests of a massively architectural conception of the work as a whole.

The very Lisztian Fantasia and the four encores (except the inevitable

C-sharp minor prelude, which was given a scrupulously underemphasized and unsensational reading) were exercises in transcendent virtuosity which won thonderous approval for their incredible dexterity.

To this hearer, Rachmaninoff's sinewy intellect and gigantic executive gifts would have been better bestowed upon a program built around something more substantial than a series of Fantasies; but it is always a privilege to attend one of his recitals, be the program what it may. For he is a very great artist.—L. M.
