

RACHMANINOFF'S RECITAL CALLED MUSICAL DELIGHT

By BETTY HYNES

Opening the program of Rachmaninoff's recital yesterday afternoon in Constitution Hall was a happy surprise. Contrary to the usual somber concertos and symphonic poems, he played first a group of Chopin and followed with Beethoven's Sonata Appassionata, Opus 57.

Of Chopin, he played a barcarolle, waltz, nocturne and one of the ballades. Nothing could be more conducive to a musical mood. Nothing, despite their seeming simplicity, more difficult to play. Rachmaninoff approached the music almost with veneration. Poised in that delicate balance between his own interpretations and tradition, under his gentle fingers the compositions became lovely, new thrilling things, steeped in musical light. They sparkled, they sang, full of sentiment without sentimentality.

For the Beethoven, he saved all his fervor. He played the three parts of the Sonata without interruption, sustaining the feeling and flow of musical thought for himself and his audience. No music comes closer to the human heart and he poured his whole heart and soul into his playing. He scorned the romantic manner, yet nothing could have been more brilliant, more firm than his tone. There was nothing pretty about it. It was a stirring, thrilling performance.

The second half of the program was devoted to Schumann, Schubert, Wagner and Chopin again. Even the old favorite Schubert Serenade regained under his fingers some of the old limpid, poetic quality it had before Sidney Romberg made it famous.

And having heard Rachmaninoff, it is not difficult to understand why he stands apart. He has not been taken in by the neuroticism of the new composers. He loves tradition. He clings to a world that recognized and was not afraid of a genuine emotion, and better than anyone else he conveys the sensations of that world to his enraptured listeners.

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