

Music and Musicians

Reviews and News of Capital's Programs.

Rachmaninoff Recital At Constitution Hall.

ONE is accustomed to hear the crystalline clearness of tone of various pianists spoken of and emphasized. Of all artists who make this a part of their equipment none poses it to such a degree as Rachmaninoff who appeared yesterday afternoon at Constitution Hall. Pearls of tone, perfect in form and perfectly matched are at his fingertips and they are formed into a marvelously graded chain without a flaw. To the unsurpassed beauty of finger technic is added an equally complete understanding of a variety of pedal control that gives a bewildering amount of color to the shortest phrase.

As an interpreter, Rachmaninoff is a builder constructing his mental conceptions with infinite care for details. He exhausts the possibilities of each number he plays and there is no hidden meaning or tonal effect that he overlooks. What he gives out in this way is the acme of artistry. There is beauty, there is delicacy, there is power and majesty, everything in fact, but wanting one ingredient—warmth.

In the clear, cold light of his perfection one wishes for imperfection, for some release from the intellectual form he has put around his music. His sweeping phrases just miss abandon and the beauty and delicacy lack charm. The play of imagination has been denied the listener, for everything has been found for him and given him. The mind is so thoroughly occupied with its sense of satisfaction at the wealth of beauty and consummate art that is presented to it, however, that the non-awakening of deeper enthusiasm is almost forgiven.

Rachmaninoff began his program with a barcarolle, a valse, a nocturne and a ballade of Chopin. There is hardly a pianist today who can so well give the fragile and limpid quality of Chopin and Rachmaninoff played each number with careful regard for the smallest effect that could accentuate this beauty. At the same time, the subtlety and well-o-the-wisp something that invades all Chopin had no chance to be evident for it was harnessed into a perfectly technical form.

In the Beethoven "Sonata Appassionata" he was more fortunate, achieving a certain glow with mobile pedaling and sonorous chords. In

the "Allegro Assai" he played with breadth and gradeur that gave a noble quality to his reading and came nearer to portraying the humanness of this sonata.

The last group, which consisted of a number of songs arranged for the piano by Liszt, Tausig and Rachmaninoff, called every pianist effect into play. The melodic lines were well sustained and the technical embellishments brilliantly executed with uncanny ease and limpidity. Especially beautiful were the "Dedication" of Schumann, Schubert's "Brooklet," Wagner's "Spinning

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Song" and Rachmaninoff's "Daises."

The audience, in its enthusiastic demand for more, remained seated until Rachmaninoff added a composition of his own, a waltz of Chopin's and his own arrangement of the "Bee." Without leaving the piano and understanding what the audience was waiting for, he played his own "Prelude" of which he gave an ideal interpretation.

A. E.

Betty Baum