

## RECORD AUDIENCE HEARS VIRTUOSO

His Majesty's Theatre Is  
Crowded to Doors for  
Rachmaninoff's Recital

### CLASSICS FEATURED

Music by Beethoven, Chopin  
and Others—Compositions  
and Transcriptions by  
Pianist Also Given

"S.R.O." was figuratively sung outside His Majesty's Theatre last night for the pianoforte recital given by Sergei Rachmaninoff. It was like old times to see row upon row of cars parked outside and, when the curtain went up, to see rows of people seated on the stage. It was also an old-time audience, one which has largely disappeared in these days of depression. Its superabundant enthusiasm expressed itself in a disturbing restlessness which lasted throughout the concert. Moreover, its collective pain itched to the extent of punctuating the music now and then with spasmodic bursts of applause in its eagerness to show its appreciation of Mr. Rachmaninoff's efforts.

All of which was very disconcerting for those who went for the purpose of listening to the music. The famous pianist himself must have felt it for he did not seem altogether happy, nor, generally speaking, were his interpretations cast in their usually profound musical mould.

The programme consisted of well worn classics. Interest was centred chiefly on the Sonata in F minor of Beethoven, commonly called the "Appassionata." Mr. Rachmaninoff's marvellous mode of execution of course made the performance an unusual one. It was first and foremost a virtuoso achievement, however, which also is not customary in the case of this artist. He had thought it all out very carefully beforehand and knew just what effects he was going to obtain. The first movement might be described as a study in abrupt contrasts, nevertheless, literally speaking, a perfectly correct reading as anyone who knows the score will vouch. The theme and variations which constituted the second, were treated in a much more poetical and imaginative manner. Also Mr. Rachmaninoff appreciates Beethoven's tempo markings here more than most pianists do.

The remainder of the programme was devoted to pieces of smaller dimensions. There was a group of Chopin, the Nocturne in F sharp major, the Mazurka in C sharp minor and the F minor Fantasy. The nocturne was one of the brighter spots of the recital. It was beautifully played in a full blooded, romantic fashion without any emphasis upon its somewhat faded and feminine sentiment. The fantasy was one of those items which suffered by the audience's anxiety to show its admiration for Mr. Rachmaninoff's genius. Half way through, the clapping started and, of course, killed the effect of the entire piece.

In the second half of the programme, the charm was centred upon a humble but lovely Schubert Impromptu, in F minor. Only an artist of the calibre of Mr. Rachmaninoff could have treated this simple and soulful little piece of musical conversation with such fine individuality and so carefully and so earnestly. Two preludes of his own and Schumann's popular "Nachtstueck," Opus 23, completed the really musical part of the programme.

Other items were arrangements and transcriptions of varying degrees of worth. The performer's own piano version of the prelude from Bach's Violin Sonata in E major sounded scholarly and was played in that peculiarly abrupt, dry and sweeping way which Mr. Rachmaninoff is so fond of exhibiting sometimes. With all due respect, one cannot voice the same congratulations on his arrangement of the scherzo from Mendelssohn's "Midsummer Night's Dream" Suite, which sounds monotonous on the pianoforte depending as it does for its effect to a great extent upon its colorful orchestration. The Weber-Tausig "Invitation to the Dance" need not be taken too seriously. It is amusing in piano dress. Furthermore, it was magnificently played.

Mr. Rachmaninoff was generous with his encores. He concluded with his C sharp minor Prelude, the opening bars of which were completely drowned by the noise made by the excited audience.

T. A.