

Music and the Drama

(Conducted by LAWRENCE MASON)

A GREAT RECITAL.

Rachmaninoff, Master Pianist, Gives Fine Program in Massey Hall.

The great Russian master, Sergel Rachmaninoff, closed the 1933 series of "Tuesday Nights at Massey Hall" yesterday with another of his typically magnificent piano recitals. The more one hears this superb player, the more one admires his colossal technical equipment, his penetrating insight into the heart of the music and his sinewy power of stamping his own personality upon everything he plays. One does not resent this strongly personalized interpretation in his case, because the man behind the artist is great enough to make his own commentary on the composer's message a matter of profound import.

He reversed the first two numbers on his program last night, opening with Beethoven, and then proceeding to his own transcription of Bach's E-major Sonata for violin alone. This was sumptuously scored, if one may thus indicate his orchestral treatment of the piano, and so splendidly played as to call forth two separate rounds

of prolonged applause. Schubert's little-known but lovely Rondo in D-major followed, then a brilliantly handled Debussy suite, and then a Chopin encore.

After the intermission came a novel and substantial work, in the recitalist's elaborate and searching "Variations on a Theme of Corelli," which no one but a giant of the keyboard would dare attempt, least of all with such bursts of burning speed. A graceful but complex Borodin Scherzo was taken at dizzy velocity, and then the Weber-Taubert "Invitation to the Dance" followed, bearing so little resemblance to the too-familiar orchestral version as to seem like another "transcription" by Rachmaninoff himself. It fairly ran the gamut between Oriental languors and orgiastic frenzies, but was, of course, a prodigious display of virtuosity.

Mendelssohn was translated into Rachmaninoff next: this reviewer has no fault to find with brilliant transformations of such hackneyed items as this and the preceding Weber number. If they are to be included at all in such an excellent and novel program, they must suffer a sea-change into something rich and strange. Two encores failed to calm the clamorous applause, so finally, with something like a sardonic smile relaxing his iron features, the pianist played the C-sharp minor prelude, and every one went home thoroughly happy.—L. M.