

MUSIC

Rachmaninoff Earned
Warm Welcome on His
Return to Montreal

A recital by Rachmaninoff is not an occasion of surprises or shocks; it is like a meeting with old friends, both in the player and in most of his music, and even the audiences and its enthusiasm changes little if at all. The resemblance is all the greater when the recital begins, as did the recital on Monday at the Imperial theatre, with Rachmaninoff's well-tried war-horse, Beethoven's Thirty-two Variations in C minor, which he played with all the old and amazing skill of hands and wrists. Chopin's sonata in B minor—much played recently—was treated with the same kind of brilliancy and crispness; this sonata can be made into a sort of dream—perhaps Chopin intended something of the kind; there was little that was dreamy in Rachmaninoff's performance—the sleep in the slow movement was too deep and peaceful for dreams. Between Beethoven and Chopin came Scarlatti, and the playing exactly fitted music written for the harpsichord.

The second half of the program was all Russian, except for a Caprice by Dohnanyi, who filled the place at the end usually given to another Hungarian, Liszt. A Fairy Tale by Medtner was one of the best moments of the recital; a Poem and a robust Etude by Scriabine came near to this. The Dohnanyi Caprice was a light affair—for the hearers—but had more in it than Borodin's Scherzo or a piece by Rubinstein which for want of a better name is called a Barcarolle. An Etude and a Prelude by Rachmaninoff were on the program among these, and, for the Prelude, he brought in the inevitable C sharp minor, thus, for once, getting ahead of his audience.

Additions to the program followed of course. There were an arrangement, slightly heavy, of Mendelssohn's "Midsummer Night's Dream" Scherzo, Liszt's redecoration of Schubert's song "Das Wandern" and a Chopin Mazurka, which was better than much which had preceded it. And then Rachmaninoff let the audience know that he, at any rate, had had enough.