

# Rachmaninoff Plays

Russian Pianist-Composer Rises to Heights of Inspired Imagination and Receives Ovation From Deeply Impressed Audience.

THE piano recital of Sergei Rachmaninoff at Macauley's last night was a striking reminder of the difference between a master musician and one who is merely the master of an instrument. The day when a pianist or violinist considered it the duty of a performer to perform with his teeth, to tear his instrument to shreds, to saw it in two as the stage manager seems to see his assistant, then to put it together—has passed. We think of the great musicians of the past as giants, but the modern musician justifies more and more the name of a man who forgets audience and himself in the ideal of the composer. Rachmaninoff is a famous exemplar of this. He and Rachmaninoff manifests himself before the piano he

was as one rapt and removed into the world of musical imagination. Applause at the close of the first movement of the Chopin sonata was an irrelevance which was borne with patience but was not permitted to occur again. This was the solitary interruption for the audience was exceptionally quiet, held as if in a spell which a breath might break.

The general emotional tone of the recital was cheerful, even gay and brilliant, yet there was no number on the programme which seemed to be there for display purposes. Even the Schulz-Elver "Blue Danube" waltz was a real waltz which awakened the pulses by its dance rhythm. The bravura which memory associates with it seemed to have evaporated. The Weber "Rondo Brilliant" which one remembered as a necklace of rhinestones had become a string of turquoise and coral. The Moskowski "Jongleuse" twirled and swirled his shining balls with the grace and rhythm of a super-juggler, and the Rachmaninoff Serenader plucked his strings as eloquently as he sang. The last number was an extraordinary example of the pianist's imaginative use of tone color.

The Chopin sonata, with its familiar funeral march, was played in heroic mood—the first movement fraught with large, impersonal passion, the march a pageant of courage rather than a dirge. Rachmaninoff, like Paderewski, plays Chopin in the grand manner—without sentimentality. The Nocturne had the same sincere directness given it by the great Pole. The two Valses had, however, a certain elf-like quality which is peculiarly Rachmaninoff. One looked especially, of course, for the pianist's individuality in his own compositions, the "Melodie," "Serenade" and the longed for C sharp minor Prelude, but the hallmark of his genius was on everything. He was never the mere player, always the interpreter and always the great artist.

The large audience accorded Mr. Rachmaninoff a reception such as only the highest exponents of musicianship receive or deserve.

A. L. H.

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