

Big Audience at Academy Hears Rachmaninoff Play

The Brooklyn Institute of Arts and Sciences led another trump card Monday night and crowded the opera house of the Academy of Music for a piano recital. The artist was Sergei Rachmaninoff, Russian composer and pianist, who is generally conceded to be one of the few foremost musicians of this day. Mr. Rachmaninoff, who has played in Brooklyn several times already, is one of that small group of musical personalities who can attract an audience large enough to fill all the seats of the Academy's larger auditorium.

Rachmaninoff, when at the keyboard, shows a fondness for the simpler compositions of pianoforte literature. Last night he played an Improvization (Opus 31) by Medtner, Weber's "Rondo Brilliant" (once high in the esteem of pianists but now overlooked or consciously passed by), Chopin's B flat minor sonata, a waltz and nocturne by the same composer, Rachmaninoff's "Melodie" and "Serenade," Moszkowski's "La Jongleuse" and the Schulz-Evler transcription of Strauss' "Beautiful Blue Danube." To this list, of course, had to be added various encores.

In most great artists lies distinctive personality. This is true of such personages in the music world as Paderewski, Kreisler, Farrar, and is eminently so of Rachmaninoff. Simple and unassuming in manner, radiating sincerity from the moment he steps out upon the stage, this genius of the pianoforte at once creates an atmosphere in which his audience becomes responsive to the appeal of his power and virtuosity. The artist and the man unite in a remarkable degree in the personality of Rachmaninoff.

As a pianist, this player is one of exquisite refinement. He loves gentle trceries, clear and lucid. He might almost be described as an etcher at the pianoforte, so fine and so clear does he make the lines of each number. In Rachmaninoff's interpretations are found little of the vivid, virile imaginings exhibited in his compositions. Rather, he seems to dream over his numbers, seeking to do them perfectly, giving clearness to every phase, and chiseling every musical thought to its finest poetic expression.