

RUSSIAN PIANIST GRIPS AUDIENCE

Rachmaninoff Gives Masterful Recital at Orchestra Hall; Audience Clamors for Encores.

BY CHARLOTTE M. TARSNEY.

Recitals by the Russian pianist-composer, Sergel Rachmaninoff, are high lights in a musical season. Tuesday evening, the distinguished artist played in Orchestra hall and notwithstanding a driving rain such a throng welcomed his return to the city that standing room only was the order of the evening.

Reserved in his bearing, coldly aloof from his audience in his manner, save when his strongly pronounced features relax into a smile in acknowledgment of applause, this reticent artist provides an evening of piano music of unalloyed delight. The personality of the artist is never permitted to obtrude itself between the composer and the music. His concern is primarily to recreate the composer's ideas, not to dazzle by a remarkable display of virtuosity. The dazzling technique is there but it is merely one means whereby Rachmaninoff unfolds the musical content of a work. Over and above this ranks the penetrating insight, the sympathetic understanding, the analytical mind which gives to the hearer an illuminating grasp of the full beauty of the number interpreted. The complete structure of a work stands out vividly, its salient contours and decorative details presented in masterly fashion.

Such was the reading given the three movements of the Bach English Suite, No. 2. The tone obtained from the instrument throughout the work was one of rich beauty and the clarity of phrase was admirable. Mendelssohn's Variations Serieuses, a Chopin Nocturne and his Scherzo in C sharp minor, Liszt's Funerailles and his brilliant Rhapsodie Espagnole and Rachmaninoff's own Etude Tableau in B minor, his Etude Tableau in G minor and his arrangement of Moussorgsky's Hopak with numerous encores, including the ever popular C-sharp minor Prelude, made up the balance of the program.

Outstanding in the list were the readings of the Chopin numbers, his own compositions and the brilliant Liszt Rhapsodie. The Chopin interpretations may not follow the exact style of other artists, changes in emphasis giving somewhat a different effect, but the melodic sway of the numbers as he presents them is most effective. His own two etudes were thematically interesting and technically baffling and the setting of Moussorgsky's Hopak an impetuous, melodious bit. Each time the composer plays the noted Prelude new glimpses of the breadth and appeal of the work are brought home to students more pronouncedly. The audience was clamoring for still further encores when this reviewer left Orchestra hall.