

TRIUMPH OF OTHER CONCERTS REPEATED BY RACHMANINOFF

BY O. B. KEELER

For the first time since he has been giving piano recitals in Atlanta, the hearers of Sergei Rachmaninoff were grouped at close range instead of spread about the vast and somewhat draughty spaces of the city auditorium, and the change was a pleasant one. Monday evening in the Wesley hall—a splendid setting for such events—the great Russian pianist and composer repeated his previous triumphs with a program which, though as brilliantly given as any before, appeared to be rather on the technical side than on the popular; a proper enough progression, probably, and amply compensated for, even to the most ardent proponents of the popular, by some of the closing numbers and encores.

The "English Suite No. 2," by Bach, was followed by Mendelssohn's "Variations Serieuses" and a two-part Chopin group, a nocturne and one of the more scholarly and less pyrotechnic of the Scherzos—that in C sharp minor—all played with the characteristic fine taste and exemplary execution of this most workmanlike of pianists. Mr. Rachmaninoff is a most odd combination of the businesslike and the artistic; perhaps it would be better to say that he masks the soul of a great artist beneath the unassuming exterior and poseless demeanor of a forthright and modest musician. His close-cropped hair, immobile countenance, and economy of gesture and movement, whether at the piano or bowing his acknowledgments, all set him rather apart in the superficialities of his art.

In the massive Liszt number, "Funerailles," Mr. Rachmaninoff gave the first and most impressive exhibition of the program of his astounding powers. His presentation of that portentous composition, heard here for the first time in years by a great pianist, probably was the climax of the evening, though the welcome accorded the pianist's own composition, his pet Prelude, was the warmest, going so far even as to break in upon the resonant opening chords with a gust of hand-clapping that was sincere if out of taste.

In fact, Rachmaninoff's own group, the "Serenade," the "Minuet" and "Hopak," proved the most generally pleasing of the program. The last-named number, which might be termed a glorified Slavonic breakdown, was encoored with such spontaneity and heartiness that Mr. Rachmaninoff repeated it—a joyous, bounding bit of simple composition as easy to follow as some old folk-dance.

The program ended with the Debussy-Dohnanyi "Valse" (Naila), and then came the beloved Prelude and another encore or two, completing the second offering of the Artists' Series with great success.