

DELIGHTED AUDIENCE HEARD RACHMANINOFF

Visiting Pianist Charmed
and Impressed Central
Church Gathering

The mere appearance of Sergei Rachmaninoff arouses curiosity and interest. The Slavic features were familiar and yet the moment he came on the platform of the Central Congregational, Wednesday, one was struck again by the intensity of his face, by a certain ironic inscrutability almost Oriental. Then one waited for him to play. In the first

number—Caprice, Aid de Ballet, ("Alceste"), Gluck-Saint Saens — in the weaving of the stately dance strains, appeared one of the essences, perhaps the essence of his playing—elegance. "Elegance" — it is, unfortunately, in English, a much-abused word, and yet there is no other that so exactly expressed the poise, the polish and the sauvity which one means.

After the exquisite purling of Gluck came Beethoven's Variations, C Minor. Here Rachmaninoff was again master. As the appreciation of Beethoven matures and grows — as it is always doing—one realizes more and more his strength. As someone or other has said, Beethoven takes no easy path to the emotions but carves his slow furrows through the granite of the intellect.

The characteristic elegance seemed more apparent than ever in the Schumann number, Sonata, G. Minor. One could hardly imagine more fluency than the "Allegro Molto" movement nor a more dulcet interpretation of the Schumann sentimentality in the Andantino. There was a rare quality of gentle elegiac sweetness in the playing of it.

Rachmaninoff's playing of Chopin, had intensity and depth and yet, except in the delicious encore waltz, it missed the inevitable enchantment cast by de Pachmann and Cortos.

"Sonnetto del "Petarcarca" of Liszt echoed the sweet Tuscan tongue. One felt the serene dignity of the sonnet, and in the voluptuous lingering of the music the love theme of the poem. Rachmaninoff's playing of Liszt in both the "Sonnetto" and "Polonaise," are to be remembered. As a matter of fact, there seems to be some kinship between Liszt and Rachmaninoff. Perhaps it is in the virtuosity common to both and the temptation to indulge in it that has proved irresistible to them in their compositions. Of the pianist's performance of his own "Prelude" and "Etude Tableau," one need not comment and the favorite C-Sharp Minor Prelude brought tremendous applause.

The large audience which greeted the composer-pianist was rapt and enthusiastic. But even at the concert of a master it seems impossible not to have the usual flurry of late-comers.—Mary Manners.

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