

Music Events

RACHMANINOFF'S RECITAL

There may have been more enthusiastic audiences at piano recitals in the Academy of Music than that which listened to Sergei Rachmaninoff, the Russian composer and conductor, last night but they have been few indeed. Of the five numbers on the program his own great prelude in C sharp minor followed his beautiful "Serenade," and it is no disparagement of his rendition of the others to feel that the audience was waiting impatiently for him to arrive at the number in which his own well loved composition was to be given, for when the first notes of it were heard a ripple of applause ran through the crowded house as the favorite was recognized.

Students of the piano in Brooklyn perhaps never listened more intently and more intently to any number than to the great Russian's playing of this prelude, for they found that he gave a tempo to certain passages that is not indicated in the printed page, even though issued by Carl Fischer. Especially noticeable in this respect was his hurrying of the time at the chimes effects, beginning at the 13th measure from the end. There is no mark in the music that suggests speeding up and it was a revelation perhaps to all in the audience that had not heard him play that number before when he hastened the tempo. This was the greatest surprise for the piano cognoscenti of the evening for in all the numbers Rachmaninoff kept closely within the limitations as to tempo laid down by the masters from whom he drew his program.

The opening selection was the Caprice, Air de Ballet from Alceste, by Gluck-Saint-Saens, an arrangement of the names in the program which left much to be desired owing to the hyphenation of Saint-Saens. The heaviest number of the evening followed, the Sonata Appassionata of Beethoven, with its three movements of allegro assai, andante con moto and allegro ma non troppo. In the second movement was particularly noticed Rachmaninoff's wonderful touch.

After the stately Beethoven came the ethereal Chopin, who spoke to the enraptured listeners through a scherzo, etude and ballade. Though all three displayed the Russian's mastery of dynamics, technic and interpretation, the etude gave perhaps the most striking illustration of his power in that his great qualities were as apparent in that simple composition as in the more elaborately embroidered themes of the evening.

The decoration of Strauss' beautiful waltz, "Artist's Life," by Godowsky, lost nothing in its handling by the performer.

This last number on the program brought so much applause that the pianist had to give five encores of which the most prominent were two waltzes by Chopin, Op. 64, Nos. 2 and 3. As the audience was giving alarming indications of remaining here all night, Rachmaninoff fitted his closing encore into the rhapsodical attitude of the listeners by sending them home in a whirl of emotions intensified by that fascinatingly weird Russian dance, Moussorgsky's "Gopak." W. E. H.