

## MUSIC OF THE DAY

**S**ERGE RACHMANINOFF long since brought to an end his pilgrimage along the paths of musical righteousness. His unswerving devotion to lofty and self-effacing ideals has won for him the position of highest eminence among pianists of the day. That Karma of every musician, the full and appreciative house, is his at all recitals—even those given in Brooklyn—and the wonder of it is that all has been gained through the dissemination of an art supremely impersonal, subjective and noble in every mood. Mr. Rachmaninoff's attitude toward the music of the masters is one of understanding yet awe-full reverence. His own personality, however, by eloquent paradox, radiates through all he plays. In his sincere desire to present Beethoven and Chopin to us as Beethoven and Chopin, he actually presents to us a personality of towering individuality—his playing is a far more accurate and telling mirror of the artist than is the playing of half a dozen pianists less modest—even less honest in their creative characters.

At the Academy last evening Mr. Rachmaninoff played under Institute auspices. His program consisted of a Saint-Saens' transcription of a Gluck Caprice and Air de Ballet, from "Alceste," the "Appassionata" Sonata of Beethoven, a Chopin group, two of his own pieces and Godowsky's arrangement of a Strauss waltz. One does not expect more from him in the line of novel arrangement, for it is characteristic that he should adhere to works which, however hackneyed, remain among the lofty and seldom successfully scaled peaks of piano literature. It is a little difficult to speak in detail of Rachmaninoff's manner in, say, the "Appassionata." To comment in the standardized critical phrases of temperament and technique is wholly inadequate. The piano has no secrets to keep from this musician, yet his mastery of the instrument is so subservient to his interpretative idealism that one is never impressed by it.

In his own music the Russian spirit is ever present. Rachmaninoff's admiration for Tchaikowsky is a third-rate cliché—so also should be the fact that his own musicianship is far deeper and more commanding than that of the older master. It may be that his orchestral works fail to reveal the vivid inspiration of Tchaikowsky symphonies, but his songs and his piano music—such as the "Serenade" and Prélude on last evening's program—are works of an intelligence far more stable, far more cultured than are the songs and piano pieces of Pitor Uytch.