

Sergei Rachmaninoff was engaged at Orchestra hall in the task of demonstrating that virtuoso piano playing has not perished from the earth. Such playing as his is nothing short of exciting. He can take that Schubert antiquity, the "Wanderer" Fantasy, or the poorest of the Chopin Nocturnes and turn them into thrilling, pulse-stirring music dramas. As for the "Rakoczy March," Liszt arrangement, no orchestral conductor with his ninety or a hundred highly trained experts could ever storm the heights or put march rhythm into his hearers' toes any more successfully than Mr. Rachmaninoff does with his ten fingers and a piano keyboard.

Even in his most exhilarating form, however, Mr. Rachmaninoff could not do the impossible. He could not prove that the Prelude of his own which he played is as interesting a work as some of his other compositions, and he failed completely in trying to create the belief that the Medtner "Fairy Tales" are interesting music at all. But no one minds low spots when there are high spots by their side.