

## RACHMANINOFF IN WHIMSICAL MOOD

### Pianist Shows Originality and Power in Novel Program.

BY JAMES H. ROGERS

Of all the pianists before the public today, Sergei Rachmaninoff, who played last night in Masonic Auditorium, is the most individual, and by that same token unfailingly interesting. He holds the absorbed, not infrequently the breathless attention of his hearers, as it is given few performers of any sort to do. And this without invariable regard to the music offered.

He is always giving us the unexpected, often making up his programs in what appears to be a whimsical mood.

For example, last night he began with the Beethoven "Moonlight" sonata, called by the composer a "Sonata quasi una Fantasia." This he followed up with the Liszt "Fantasia quasi Sonata," perhaps, as we may be allowed to guess, intrigued by the inverted designation. This piece of the illustrious abbe was written, so the sub-title runs, "After Reading Dante." It makes one doubt whether the perusal of the works of the Italian poet is to be commended to composers about to set pen to paper. There are rich sonorities in it, and mellifluous lyric passages, and plus Rachmaninoff it is very delightful to listen to. But it is rather shallow in its substance, and far from being one of the best pieces of Liszt.

I think it had never before been played here in public. The "Moonlight" sonata, familiar as it is, is seldom included in the programs of visiting pianists.

#### Plays With Restraint.

Mr. Rachmaninoff gave a finely proportioned, lucid reading of it, his tone modulated with consummate art. He did not tear any passions to tatters in the turgid finale. Instead, he was at all times masterful, vital.

There was a Chopin group, notable especially for magnificent performances of the F minor fantasy and the C sharp minor scherzo. And there was an attractive little piece, "Fairy Tale," by the unjustly neglected Russian composer Medtner. A prelude by the recitalist featured the proceedings. But alas for the hopes of more than one auditor, it was not the fearfully abused one in C sharp minor. It was another, and a better prelude.

A Strauss-Tausig "Valse Caprice," played with dazzling virtuosity, closed the program proper.

And then began the series of encores. Mr. Rachmaninoff's success was as impressive as ever. Resounding applause and many recalls indicated the enthusiastic mood of the audience. For which there was plenty of warrant.

The Russian pianist is a performer in a thousand, or better. His facility is really boundless, and his touch a marvel of beauty and pliancy. There is prodigious power here, along with the ability to weave veritable gossamer webs of sound. And all this is at the service of a singularly original temperament, which is always leading us along new and untried ways.