

RACHMANINOFF GIVES PIANOFORTE RECITAL

Sergel Rachmaninoff, foremost among the musical moderns of Russia, as composer, pianist and conductor, made his debut in Boston yesterday afternoon in Symphony hall in a pianoforte recital consisting solely of his own compositions.

Mr Rachmaninoff is a member of the "younger Moscow school." Entering the St Petersburg conservatoire at 9, he remained three years, when he was transferred to the conservatoire at Moscow, where he studied piano with Tschalkowsky's friend, Zvierev, and with Slioti.

In composition he was the pupil of Taneiev and Arensky. In 1892 he won a gold medal at this school for composition. He made a successful appearance in 1899 with the London Philharmonic society. Since 1893 Mr Rachmaninoff has been professor of the pianoforte in the Maryinsky institute for girls at Moscow.

In His Own Compositions.

It was indisputably a program of Rachmaninoff, by Rachmaninoff, and perhaps for Rachmaninoff and the people as well. His "D Minor" sonata began it. Followed then a group of four shorter miscellaneous pieces, and another of four preludes, the last of them the popular "C sharp minor," which is quite the best known of his piano compositions in America.

The judgment of an artist, both as composer and executant, whether he be pianist, violinist, singer or what not, is not always best accomplished when the performance is limited to the artist's own works. On the contrary, a curious and peculiar interest attaches to hearing interpretation of music by the composer himself.

An idiom, unmistakably personal in its cast, ran through the program. Lightness, brightness, naivete, ardor, passion or vehemence, as mere objective moods, it has not.

Mr Rachmaninoff's music seems ever pregnant with some deeper, some more significant motive. An eager restlessness, disdainful of repose, incessively stirs the mind to some new ambition, new philosophy, new resolve. As in the Lento of the sonata, the most convincing of its movements—so in other portions of his music, the ceaseless progression of the inner voices, and the haunting, reiterated figures of its melody, assume the cast of melancholy plaintiveness.

In the "Humoresque," which in Russian is synonymous with grewsome drollery, Mr Rachmaninoff invents rhythm and harmonic color which are pungent, almost sardonic. By the same means in the "C minor" prelude, he is sullen and defiant. The Slavic love of introspection and morbid feeling was always apparent.

Psychological Playing.

Mr Rachmaninoff, as composer, obtains these qualities by various means, one of them the frequent use of the notes upon the secondary degrees of the scale for his melodies, another the exquisitely sculptured inner voices, reminding of Schumann; another the restless individuality of his harmonization.

Mr Rachmaninoff is psychological in his piano playing quite as much as in his composing. Virtuosity, as such, was unthought of. Unobtrusive, subservient technic, however, was present.

This artist produces a beautiful tone, which in the pianissimo becomes remarkably ethereal. His melody tone has both euphony and character. The accompanying figuration is always subservient. The pedaling is extraordinarily clear.

Later, with the Symphony orchestra, Mr Rachmaninoff is to be heard in larger forms.