

RACHMANINOFF HERE

Pianist Adds Six Encores to His Academy Program.

Anything less like the conventional piano recital than the opening of Rachmaninoff's first Brooklyn recital at the Academy last evening would be hard to find. This tall, awkward, Lincolnlike figure shambled across the stage and curled up over his keyboard like one of those self-taught geniuses who watch their fingers in order not to strike false notes. And he began as softly as a breath, with the variations from that Mozart Sonata which has the "Turkish Patrol," a "piece" which schoolgirls can and do play—or at least did play forty years ago. But no schoolgirl ever played it like Rachmaninoff. He was a poet, coaxing from the keyboard dainty, melodious phrases so softly that you listened with all your ears lest some of the exquisite notes

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escape you. That quality marked his playing throughout the evening. Rachmaninoff is a poet of the keyboard and only a virtuoso incidentally, because virtuosity is necessary to play much of the music which is worth while, like the Chopin Scherzo in B flat minor, which was perhaps his most distinguished achievement last night. In that he alternately thundered like an orchestra with its kettle drums on the rampage and sighed like the wind through a pine forest in summer, and both moods were perfectly under the control of his fingers.

But there were "proceedings" long before he reached the Scherzo. His second piece was that favorite of the last century, Mendelssohn's "Ronde Capriccioso," which the pianist made really capriccioso, with sharply contrasted tempi. Every pianist in the hall pricked up her ears to hear how new the old warhorse sounded and then sighed to realize that she could never, never get the speed and feathery lightness of this man's climaxes. For their enthusiastic applause he gave them the Mendelssohn "Spinning Song," played daintily rather than brilliantly.

Then came the Chopin group, having the Ballade in F minor, one of the easier waltzes and the Scherzo. To them he added the D flat Waltz, known in the teaching studios as "the dog chasing its tail," and the Waltz in A flat.

Finally came Rachmininoff's own group, opening with the C sharp minor Prelude—which Mr. Huneker says is known as "It" in Flatbush. He played it less bangily than many pianists do. They probably take their cue from Siloti, who introduced the piece to this country in the old Association Hall here in Brooklyn a dozen or fifteen years ago and who brought the audience to the edges of their chairs with his fiery clangor. The composer does not seem to care much about fire and he brought out other beauties by softening both the opening chords and the close. Next was his Waltz, opus 10, and then came the concert waltz made by Liszt from Gounod's "Faust." At last there were fireworks—the thing can't be played without them—but they were relieved by a slower tempo in the middle and a touch so velvety as to make even Liszt seem poetic. Then before the audience would leave their seats came three more of the pianist's own compositions, his dainty "Barcarolle," his fiery "Polichinelle" and a graceful polka, making a feast of beauty which must have satisfied the most exacting of the big audience.