

RACHMANINOFF PLAYS.

Sergel Rachmaninoff, eminent Russian composer and pianist, was heard in piano recital last evening at the Academy of Music, the event being held under auspices of the Brooklyn Institute of Arts and Sciences. His programme was of somewhat light character, if judged from the standard recital programme viewpoint, and there was schoolgirl reminiscence in several of its selections—included among which was of course his own inimitable C sharp minor prelude. This fine composition, whose remarkable popularity has penetrated even to the vaudeville stage, Mr. Rachmaninoff plays as no one else may, also other familiars of the same parentage. A Chopin group, comprising the F minor ballade, B minor valse and the B flat minor scherzo, offered deepest significance in musical value, being interpreted in a style free of traditional flavor but interesting withal, for this great Russian composer is an explorer of musical contents and hidden novelties, governing the keys with little regard for what others do or have done, keeping them alive under his sensitive fingers, light in delivery and imbued with a certain grace that is supplemented in its appeal to an audience by the pianist's own warmth of personality. Notable was the B minor valse, perhaps smallest of the programme's eight printed numbers. This was played in a rich mood of reverie, with a delicate, spontaneous grace that instantly entranced the hearers. All in all Rachmaninoff cannot be regarded simply as a recitalist pure and simple. He will receive challenge from those in that domain—and an occasional lapse into the fine amateur frequently obtrudes itself into his performance, forcing itself upon the consciousness only to be scattered by a surprising display of authoritative powers, which those who cavil may well desire to possess, for his playing does obey the dictates of a musical imagination, of winged flights into the realms whence comes the "pictured semblance" in the material or unwritten form of compositions. Herein lies the true source of the particular interest he aroused, and let it be remembered how charmingly erratic, whimsical, tender, fluent, unusual and possessed of magic and wonderful tonal brilliancy, almost uncanny in a Liszt-like suggestiveness, this wizard is. When playing with the orchestra he is best. Once heard this wise, his memory will never fade—but as pianist, "pure and simple," notwithstanding, one may feel the spell of which holds him a present-day popular idol with the people, there is an art test, sure and just in its measurement, held in the question, "How does it come back to one?" and he, not so well as certain others in our midst, shall pass this test.

The other numbers of last night's programme were "Variations of Mozart," Mendelssohn's "Ronde Capriccioso," Rachmaninoff's opus 10, Valse and the Liszt concert paraphrase of Gounod's "Faust." Encores were Mendelssohn's "Spinning Song," two Chopin vales and the players own "Barcarolle," "Polichinelle" and "Polka."