

**RACHMANINOFF—CARNEGIE HALL.**

With wrists of steel and fingers of velvet, Sergei Rachmaninoff came before us last night in the second of the H. H. H. concerts. He was the same Sergei we knew of yore, sinister, saturnine, with a sphinx-like immobility that held us enthralled from the moment he lumbered onto the stage. There is something gargoylish about the man with his round-shouldered, curiously clutching position at the piano that is formidable and unduly fascinating. If he is an enigma there is nothing enigmatic about his performance; it is lucidity itself. For perspicacity and phrase-cleanliness that is next to pianistic godliness, Sergei Rachmaninoff stands supreme and of all the men who stalk the keyboard, he is the only one who has the courage to present that particular type of program. Of course, to the piano-pounding fraternity seated high on the Olympian heights of the gallery, it was no program at all, but to the inconsequentialists who care nothing about program cliché, it was an interesting experiment. Who but Rachmaninoff is fearless enough to go to the attic of student days and take out the Mozart No. 9. "Dust it off and show us how it should be played, and then there was Felix Bartholomew, the felicitous, in six Songs Without much Worse. Those two events were worth a thousand piano lessons from dear teacher who studied under a pupil who studied under Leschetzky.

The program began with the Mozart sonata in which Rachmaninoff gave it all the chastity that is Mozart's, he also gave it something else and that something else was an electric-piano chiseling, and this same quality when carried through every number comes precious near being obsession. There is a suspicion that he played the six Mendelssohn songs in order that he might encore them with his own edition of the "Spinning Song." Chopin we have heard under better conditions, somehow Chopin does not always lend himself to sharp pedalling. The "Valse Brillante" was whirled along with an almost Viennese quality, and the "Ballade" was over-freighted. The Grieg "On the Mountains" with its incisive sequences was a brilliant exposition. Of the two Rachmaninoff numbers, the "Barcarolle" was the most compelling, the "Polichinelle" was a parade study; an etude of repetitive chords. The Liszt "Rhapsodie Espagnole," which concluded the program, was a virtuosi display of Liszt in an orchestral mood. A Rachmaninoff recital without the ubiquitous "Prelude in C sharp Minor" is like "Hamlet" with the melancholy Dane taking a night off, it simply could not be, and so Rachmaninoff used it as an encore, thus making the end of a perfect concert for the piano fans.

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