

RACHMANINOFF'S ART NOTABLE IN RECITAL

Celebrated Russian Pianist
Holds Rapt Attention of a
Huge Audience

Plays Diversified Numbers
With Superlative Skill and
Poetic Power

By LINTON MARTIN

The superb pianistic art of Sergel Rachmaninoff made his sole recital of the season here before a close-to-capacity audience in the Academy yesterday afternoon one of the genuinely memorable musical events of the season. The great Russian composer-pianist was in a particularly inspired vein, playing with a quite captivating combination of power and poetic appeal, and while his programme might not have satisfied completely every type of taste, it was one of the best balanced he has presented in this city in recent years.

As usual, he played with austere disdain of sheer showiness for the sake of external effect. His self-contained dignity of demeanor was unshaken and unshakable throughout the afternoon, but he held the rapt and devoted attention of his hearers with a performance of dazzling technical brilliance and tremendous tone, but with deftness of detail and dynamics always made the means to excellence of interpretation, breadth of style, and compelling quality of color.

He began his concert with the Bach-Tausing A-major Organ Prelude, following this with the Beethoven Sonata, Opus 81, No. 2. The arrangement of the Bach prelude, and its presentation, exhibited scrupulous concern for the musical structure of the original, and provided an excellent point of departure for the more romantic music that was to follow. There was great beauty of tone in the Beethoven sonata, the slow movement being especially poetic in performance, with a splendid balance maintained throughout.

Rachmaninoff has always been particularly felicitous in his Chopin playing. Many an earnest amateur might profitably try to learn from him his skill in playing Chopin with expressiveness of feeling and brimming beauty, yet without verging upon sentimentality. His Chopin numbers yesterday were among the less hackneyed in their respective groups—the F sharp minor Polonaise, A-flat major Mazurka, A-flat major Valse, and C-sharp minor Scherzo. Clear-cut, crisp tone and touch, and splendid strength marked these numbers, and they were refreshingly free from any taint of mauling mood.

A Liszt group, that came next, consisted of "Funeralia," "Valse Oubliee" (with its striking kinship to the "Mephisto" Waltzes); and "Voices of the Wood." Most impressive of these was the first, with its stern solemnity and sombre tread. The programme was rounded out with Medtner's charming B-minor "Fairy Tale," the pianist's own wistfully poetic and subdued G-flat major prelude, and the overly long and tedious "Islamey" Fantasy of Balakreff; after which came the usual encores, with Rimsky-Korsakoff's piquant "Flight of the Bumble Bee" one of the most popular, and finely effective for the piano.