

RACHMANINOFF ART SUPERB IN RECITAL

Great Russian Pianist
Plays With Impressive
Power in the Academy

By LINTON MARTIN

Those qualities of superb musicianship and utter disdain of meretricious mannerisms which have given Sergei Rachmaninoff a place all his own among the world's greatest pianists of his day again deeply impressed an audience of fair size when the grim, gaunt, gray Russian gave his annual recital in the Academy yesterday afternoon.

It was a semi-surprise program that Rachmaninoff presented, all of the numbers on the first half of the concert being changed from those previously announced. But it was a program richly satisfying in assured and unassailable musical values of the great classic and romantic composers, among whom the pianist may rightly claim definite position himself, for he was the only contemporary, in point of time, represented at his recital.

What novelty the occasion possessed was not in the works themselves, but was limited to transcriptions by Rachmaninoff, these being his arrangement of the Prelude in E-major of Bach, from the Violin Sonata, at the beginning of the recital, while the regular program closed with his own version of the dainty and elfin Scherzo from Mendelssohn's precocious "Midsummer Night's Dream" music, after which, of course, came the usual encores in response to the insistent demands of the eager audience that well filled upper floors, although attendance in the parquet was of moderate size.

Transcriptions for the piano made by Rachmaninoff are among the most musicianly and felicitous to be heard. This is but natural from the composer who played his own Leonine Third Piano Concerto here with the New York Philharmonic-Symphony several months ago, and whose masterly tone poem, "The Island of the Dead," is a commanding feature on the Philadelphia Orchestra program this week—evidences of his consummate musicianship in creative work as well as the interpretive field.

The Beethoven "Appassionata" Sonata, played without pause between movements while latecomers might have imagined they were barred from a Stokowski performance, was invested with strength and feeling the more potent because of the external austerity of the pianist. His audience was especially delighted with his three Chopin numbers—the lovely F-sharp minor Nocturne (dubbed the "Mediterranean" Nocturne by the excessively articulate George Sand, C-sharp minor Mazurka, and the A-flat Ballade, deservedly the most popular of the four, though the audience was left to guess which one it might draw.

After the intermission Rachmaninoff played two of his own preludes, in B minor and A minor; Schubert's F minor Impromptu; the Weber-Taubig "Invitation to the Dance," and the Mendelssohn music already mentioned.