

RACHMANINOFF IN SECOND RECITAL

Pianist Excels in Early Sonata by Beethoven

Sergei Rachmaninoff gave his second recital of the current season in Symphony Hall yesterday afternoon. The audience was much smaller than that usually attending a concert by a pianist of Rachmaninoff's stature. The concert itself was, on the other hand, better than most of those given by the Russian.

He was completely in the vein and showed a flexibility of mood that is generally regarded as foreign to his make-up. Leaving out for the moment the choice of selections, he played not as the cold, introspective, almost pessimistic soul that so many people choose to call him, but rather with the fires and the versatility of romantic genius.

It would be too much, more than one would want, to expect that in playing with romantic fervor, Rachmaninoff would arrive at that type of romance which is best epitomized by moonlight and sentimentality. What he can do, when he will, is leap high with the ardors of what may be called martial romanticism, the enthusiasm of life. And so he chose yesterday.

This was most manifest in a stirring performance of Schumann's Symphonic Etudes, so often played, so often left dull and cold. Above all else to march at all these studies need vim and sonority. Mr. Rachmaninoff's abilities in summoning volume of swelling tone without resort to pounding are well known. In no way could these abilities have been better utilized than they were in bringing to life a selection not anticipated with too great pleasure.

In a similar, perhaps more subtle way, his treatment of the Beethoven sonata in A flat, Opus 26, was equally satisfying. None too often does this lovely early composition reach the concert stage. Yet it is remarkable to note the quality of this music that stamps it not as the 32-year-old work of a genius trembling on maturity and still following in degree the precedents of the past, but rather as a music standing on its own feet. It is amazing to note also how much more the sonata seems akin to the Eroica than it does to the first or second symphonies between which it is chronologically sandwiched.

Mr. Rachmaninoff is always an able and ingratiating player of etudes and so his own and the deft ones of Mendelssohn with their sharp intrusting phrases came off pleasantly. Medtner's Fairy Tale in E minor was also neatly turned.

If any reservations as to playing or matter must be made they must be with respect to Liszt's "Funeralles" and a Taussig arrangement of a Strauss waltz. "Funeralles" could hardly have been any older. Technically there is, however, the joy of remembering two of the most skillfully built up and most forceful crescendos one may ever hear on the pianoforte. And the work undoubtedly merited the treatment it received.

After the scheduled program had closed there was another of quite decent length consisting of familiar nocturnes, waltzes and ballads by Chopin.

SUBMARINE MACHINIST