

C. W. D.

SYMPHONY HALL**Rachmaninoff**

The program of piano music which Sergei Rachmaninoff set for his recital in Symphony Hall yesterday was one which kindled more hope and interest in the breasts of serious listeners than many another this—in some ways—monumental artist has proffered of recent years.

His readings are often in the nature of surprises. Playing Beethoven's Op. 31 D Minor Sonata, Mr Rachmaninoff approached it studiously, quietly, dryly—a manner rather at marked variance with his usual flair for display. This earlier sonata, in fact, lacks the hint of brooding and storm indentifying the later Beethoven—wherefore the pianist, pliant, carefully elucidates the intellectual, phraseological content.

Conversely, those who have mistakenly been advised that Bach is wholly cerebral (and therefore dull), should have been present to hear the brilliant, splendid sweep of Rachmaninoff's arrangement of the E Major Sonata for violin alone. One can imagine that great Johann Sebastian's hallowed ashes stirring uneasily at some of the colloquial (and Rachmaninovian) harmonies that couch his chaste themes—yet the piano version of this sonata has a vigorous, compelling majesty that more than repays any license unduly taken.

Under the sinewy fingers, the Debussy Suite was another revelation. Sensibly recognizing that after some 20 or 40 years Debussy can hardly be classed as a novelty, Mr Rachmaninoff has discarded all studied, arty methods of approach. The result—great piano music, handsomely played.