

MUSIC

STATLER BALLROOM

Sergei Rachmaninoff

For the inaugural of their seventh season, the Morning Musicales sponsored by the Boston School of Occupational Therapy could scarcely have chosen a more classic living exponent of the art of the pianoforte than Sergei Rachmaninoff. The time has come when this celebrated Russian pianist-composer sloughs off the sequins of empty virtuosity. Instead, this latter-day Rachmaninoff takes the works of his program one by one, and, from the austere Olympus of his rich years as a musician, subjects them to a severe musical scrutiny. The result is a style far more contemplative than was Mr Rachmaninoff's earlier wont.

Nowhere was this noon-day of Rachmaninoff's maturity more in evidence than in the Mozart Variations which introduced his concert. Years back, this graceful set of arabesques on a particularly graceful Mozart tune would have served the pianist with an opportunity for a breathtaking string of glittering travesties on the original theme. Now, instead, each succeeding variation is a more profound commentary on the original melody—until, at last, the pianist is left no new facet upon which to shine his light. At no time has Mr Rachmaninoff shown himself more the artist. This same seasoned, quiet mood made itself known in his playing of the Gluck-Sgambati "Melodie."

Three Chopin pieces—a familiar Valse, Nocturne, and Ballade—reacted a shade unfavorably to the relentless reagent of this newer Rachmaninoff. They were still redeemed by Rachmaninoff's candid and unsentimental way with Chopin, but it seemed—to one, at least—that the Valse and the Nocturne warranted increased breadth and elegance. The pianist built the Ballade on heroic lines, but in the end, through lack of a kindling warmth, one looked back on it as a vast and empty pavilion of sound. Possibly the fault was Chopin's.

In Rachmaninoff's hands, Debussy's "Children's Corner" was a masterpiece of drollery—by turns tender and roistering. Each of the four well-known component pieces was

an inimitable and gem-hard entity. Even the cycloramic blue backdrop of the Statler Ballroom stage—flanked by the rich red and gold drapes—added to the remote, Lilliputian atmosphere of this charming suite.

Even in such a war-horse as the Weber-Taussig "Invitation to the Waltz," Mr Rachmaninoff, as it were, drew his punch. Weber was the lion of the occasion—the pianist made it blessedly evident that the cascades of pianistic fireworks were incidental. In playing one of his own Preludes and a Humoresque, Mr Rachmaninoff still more sharply etched the caustic brusqueries of the written scores. It was almost in a mood of resentment that Mr Rachmaninoff, in honoring, played the loveliest of all his piano transcriptions—the Viennese "Liebesleid."

On Dec 12 this series presents Lily Pons.

JORDAN HALL

Olga Averino

There are few concert singers nowadays who possess poise, unflinching good taste, an excellent voice and musical intelligence. Some command one or more of these virtues. Mme Olga Averino, who sang before a truly appreciative audience in Jordan Hall last evening, has all of them.

For this, her first local recital in several years, she selected a program generally unhackneyed, if not of unqualified merit. "Du Bist dje Ruh," "Die Forelle," and "Gretchen am Spinnrade," by Schubert, she interprets most satisfyingly, communicating the emotion of each upon beautifully sustained song.

Liszt's "Die drei Ziegeuner" and "Comment, disaient-ils," were less commendable, partly because they are undistinguished in themselves, partly because they ask theatrical dissimulation which evidently is foreign to Mme Averino. On the other hand, assorted numbers by Borodin, Tchaikovsky and Rachmaninoff, drew upon the best of her interpretive resources.

Nor is she a serious singer who fails at whimsey or humor. This was proved in two Nursery Rhymes by Levine. A vocalise by Saint-Saens upon "The Swan"—arranged for her by Alexander Siloti—and one by Ravel exhibited her considerable abilities at technically difficult vocalism. There was unadulterated pleasure in