

MUSIC SYMPHONY HALL

Rachmaninoff

Sergei Rachmaninoff received at Symphony Hall yesterday afternoon the sort of rousing ovation reserved for greatest artists and figures high in public esteem. After a long concert of beautiful piano playing, the near-capacity audience would not let him go until he had added nearly a half-hour of encores.

Watching this tribute, it was reassuring to think of his statement, published in Saturday evening's Globe, denying that he intends to retire at the end of this season. There are few musicians so well-

rounded as Rachmaninoff, who is a great virtuoso of the piano, a conductor, and a composer of acknowledged attainments.

The French Suite in E major—one of the six J. S. Bach wrote in his days at Coethen—began the afternoon. How good it was to hear Rachmaninoff play Bach with his crisp touch and a clarity that made all the counterpoint stand out! Next came Chopin's B minor Sonata, a monumental work which has its moments of greatness and its comparatively dull stretches. Purists will tell you the B minor Sonata is better music than the B-flat minor Sonata—which happens to be more often played—but how does the casual listener feel about that? Would he swap the B-flat minor, with its romantic first movement, its noble funeral march and dazzling finale, for the less emotional B minor?

Anything that Rachmaninoff plays he makes eloquent and absorbing. That is just what happened with the B minor Sonata. Oddly enough, he was here more liberal with the pedal than customary.

Similarly engrossing were Liszt's transcription of the familiar Schubert song, "The Trout"; a Schubert Impromptu; three original pieces—"Etude Tableau," "Daisies" and "Oriental Sketches"; a "Fairy Tale" by Medtner; a novelette and toccata by French modernist Poulenc, and a Liszt tarantella.

C. W. D.

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