

# MUSIC

## SYMPHONY HALL Sergei Rachmaninoff

An audience that filled all seats and occupied standing room heard Bergei Rachmaninoff play the piano at Symphony Hall, yesterday afternoon. Their cordiality matched their numbers. The concert was in the Celebrity Series of Aaron Richmond.

Among all the great pianists, Rachmaninoff is one of the most even. He can always be depended upon for performances of characteristic virtuosity mixed with that intellectual and emotional austerity which sets his playing apart. He seats himself at a piano with no outward display, performs for an hour or so without disturbing that external im-

passivity, then bows and leaves the stage. In the meantime his fingers have wrought marvels of speed, dexterity and clearness, and have shown a palette of tonal colors of astonishingly vast range.

Yesterday's program was one of the oddest this reviewer has heard him play. Nearly half consisted of transcriptions—his own of Bach's E major Partita for unaccompanied violin, and a group of eight songs arranged for piano by various hands, including his own. First, however, came Mozart's Variations upon the main theme of the first movement in his A major Sonata, followed by Bethoven's last Sonata, the Op. 111, and the F-sharp minor Novelette of Schumann.

The Mozart was excellent, and the Novelette emerged in good, sound, romantic Schumann style. But the high point of the program, musically, was that vast and enigmatic two-movement Sonata of Beethoven. Technical questions aside, this work is formidable of interpretation because it is so enigmatic, yet visionary. Mr. Rachmaninoff played the first movement splendidly, but the arietta and its variations he took as andante rather than adagio. There is so much movement in the variations that the pace can be kept very slow and not have it drag.

The Bach transcription proved interesting, not too heavy (though the concluding gigue was performed heavily), and seemed in general to be the sort of transcription that may become popular. Of the eight songs, all were pleasant enough, but hardly music of piano recital calibre. The last, Mr. Rachmaninoff's version of "Liebesfreud" by Kreisler, was a big, raging virtuoso stunt that practically concealed the violinist's gracious little number. C. W. D.

## AMUSEMENTS

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