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Sergei Rachmaninoff, as in the previous year, was once again engaged for the Fifth Master Concert, and the South German Concert Agency was certainly right to do so. For once again, the audience, packed into the Odeon Hall, could not get enough of this pianist's magnificent playing. His touch, imbued with the finest sense of sound, is perhaps unparalleled today. How magical, how full and sensuously warm the piano sings; how silvery the high notes gleam beneath his supple hands; and even in the most powerful outbursts, the tone remains noble and delightful. And culture is the hallmark of the entire musical shaping of the performances, indeed, even of the artist's outward demeanour, although beneath this seemingly frozen exterior, a passionate bubble can simmer. He performed a purely Romantic program. He played the completely unknown variations by Schubert-Tausig, which develop from a melancholy, contemplative Andantino, with extraordinary beauty; he performed Schumann's Davidsbündlertänze with the most intense expression of the souls of Florestan and Eusebius; and, alongside the Scherzo in B minor, Schumann's Scherzo in B flat minor was particularly captivating. As a composer, the artist, as in the previous year, presented himself almost too modestly, for he has written far better works than the three Études-Tableaux, of which only the lyrical-elegiac one deserves serious attention. The enthusiastic audience wanted to demand more after three encores, but the artist pointed out the clock, which compelled him to depart for new deeds. H. Ru

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