

RACHMANINOFF IS REGAL IN CONCERT

By RUBE BOROUGH

SERGEI RACHMANINOFF, sedate, serene, wandered upon the stage at Philharmonic auditorium last night and played the piano with but one break for two hours.

Some of the time the instrument sounded like an orchestra under the rain of his hammering blows—clean, every note in place, petal under rigid restraint, and the ensemble flooding imperiously to the roof.

Some of the time it sang, perhaps not so rapturously, but sweetly and with a simple elegance that is the model for thousands of American pupils.

Despite his calm, the great pianist and composer was greeted with overwhelming enthusiasm. Wooing the keys and not his audience, he was the more persistently pursued. Finally, at the end of his program, he gav way and did it—he played his well-known Prelude.

OF COURSE, the sophisticated may arch their brows at the Prelude but it is nevertheless an event of importance on the Rachmaninoff tour. You see, all the boys and girls who have grown up and are still growing up in the hope of becoming great pianists have done the Prelude. Have they played the introductory chords too fast, too impetuously? Have they raced with too much confusion through the embroidery of the middle bars? Just what is the proper atmosphere for the finale? Students must know.

Rachmaninoff told them. His interpretation was oven, without lag of tempo, his melody sang clearly, his final diminishing chords slow and rich in tonal beauty and significance.

By and large, the Beethoven sonata, opus 26, was the most satisfying number of the program. The beautiful opening theme and variations was developed with the understanding of years of musicianship; the Scherzo, while not showy, was engaging, and in the Marche Funerale the dark, troubled soul of Beethoven himself, it seemed, was speaking mournfully.

Schumann's "Etude Symphonique" followed—brisk, brusque, an onslaught of shocking cords.

Three Chopin numbers—Rondo, Opus 16, Nocturne and Waltz—offered a temporary release for tender, but careful, romance.

The Brahms "Intermezzo" (Opus 16) and Ballade were not so meaningful—at least, to most of us.

Two Medtner "Fairy Tales"—F Minor, Opus 26, and B Minor, Opus 20—kept the keyboard rippling and trembling under an intricate tech-

nique, the latter ending with a most engaging flirt of treble notes.

A BEAUTIFUL prelude composed by the pianist, with a restless melody weaving in and out of harmonic intricacies, followed.

Liszt's resounding and spectacular Rakoczy March concluded the advertised program.

Afterward the audience kept the artist walking back and forth from wings to platform until he consented to further playing. The applause kept up even after the stage was partly darkened, with Rachmaninoff emerging from the side and bowing in the gloom.

Pasadena to Offer Drama

BEGINNING Monday evening, March 7, the Pasadena Community Playhouse is to offer a five weeks' American series, in which will be traced the development of native drama from Revolutionary days to the present. One week is to be allotted to five plays, each to be given as faithfully as may be to the time and methods of its original production.

Opening the series Monday night will be "The Contrast," by Royall Tyler, the second play written by an American to be produced in America by a professional company. It was first performed at the John Street theater in New York, April 16, 1787, with Thomas Wignell as Jonathan, the originator of a long line of "stage Yankees" which reaches almost to the present. "The Contrast" is to be done at the Pasadena Community Playhouse, March 7 to 12.

**Record Serv
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Cynthia Grey**

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