

PIANIST AWES BY PERFECTION

*Rachmaninoff Performs at
Philharmonic*

*Capacity Audience Throngs
to Hear Him*

*Old Works Clothed in New
Beauty Emerge*

BY ISABEL MORSE JONES

Rachmaninoff, the great one, played in Los Angeles last night. Those who were able to crowd into the Philharmonic Auditorium were blessed. Piano playing of the order of Rachmaninoff's is so rare these days that it marks a milestone in the life of the constant concert-goer. An all-embracing conception of the composers coupled with a technical equipment without limitation makes this man tower above all the others who use the piano as an instrument of interpretation for the masters.

Rachmaninoff grows greater as the years pass. Who but a man of sorrows held in check by a marvelous restraint, could have played the Beethoven sonata op. 109 and the Chopin sonata of the funeral march in the unforgettable way in which he played it last night! Power of tone that rises to mountainous heights relieved by tenderness that is breath-taking in its beauty, and guiding all this the superimposed intelligence of a wonderfully disciplined mind which brooks no pounding for effect or lingering gesture of sentimentality, characterizes his playing. In some instances his interpretations are distinctly his own, but there is such monumental authority and utter sincerity back of them that they are to be accepted, with or without argument.

The two sonatas mentioned are very familiar. When it is said that Rachmaninoff clothes them with new beauty the truth is spoken, however impossible this may sound. His performance of Beethoven is an orchestral version with all the instruments doing their utmost. Most pianists play about half the score, by comparison. Much of interest has been written about this pianist's left hand and the marvelous strength of his third and fourth fingers. Largely because of these virtues he is able to use the natural fingering composers dream of and the listener hears melody and counterpoint in the bass that only the creator has known of before. All the young modernists who cavil at Beethoven should hear Rachmaninoff play him and they will know that the classics are as marvelous as ever, only there are few big enough to interpret them today.

Closely linked to the Beethoven were the Papillons of Schumann and the Chopin sonata, opus 35. They formed an unforgettable array.

A Rubinstein Barcarolle of amazing brilliance preceded a new work by Mediner, played from manuscript and done with a contagious whimsicality quite foreign to the usual Rachmaninoff impression. An Etude-Tableau by the pianist, ran the gamut of inspiration from romanticism to modernism and evoked a special demonstration from the audience.

Ravel's Toccata was a lovely and brilliant feat imbued with all the evanescent charm of the French genius and in the "Maid With the Flaxen Hair" and "Garden in Rain" by Debussy, Rachmaninoff succeeded in making tangible the simplicity of fine art.

Encores were generously added to this program until a late hour. The audience could never get enough. He began this unprinted program with "Troika" by Tschalkowsky and included the inescapable Prelude played so beautifully as to defy imitation, adding Kreisler's "Liebeslied" with such a wonderful embroidery of arabesques that it gave one the impression of marvelous improvisations, as perhaps it was.