

Crowded Hall Greets Great Pianist Here

Rachmaninoff Plays Own Work, Thanks For Reception

No artist could have asked for more than Pasadena music lovers accorded Sergei Rachmaninoff, great Russian pianist, last evening when he appeared at the Civic Auditorium on the Elmer Wilson course. Literally every seat was taken and despite the prevalent illness, it seemed that no ticket went unused. It was deplored by many, however, that scores of patrons arrived more than half an hour late.

Program Of Contrasts

The tall, somber master of the keyboard presented a program of contrasts, but was perhaps most completely at home in the numbers which allowed him to show in crashing crescendos, the marvelously controlled power of his long fingers.

At first the audience, although attentive to every note, seemed to be adjusting itself to his rather detached mood, even while it responded to the flashing heat and the quiet coolness of his interpretations, under which lay a depth of feeling. It sighed, too, with disappointment as the intermission broke into the program, without an encore, though thrice had the pianist been called back by insistent applause.

But as the man bent studiously over his instrument, the Steinway concert grand which he takes with him wherever he goes, his program gathered fire, and audience enthusiasm expressed itself audibly in a murmur of appreciation as Rachmaninoff substituted, unannounced, the favorite "Liebestraum" (Liszt), for the programmed Liszt "Nocturne." The "Valse Impromptu" followed and, finally, the variegated moods of the dramatic "Rhapsody No. 12," played with intense feeling.

Played Own Work

Would Rachmaninoff grant an encore? The audience obviously was wondering. He did, and spontaneous applause almost drowned the opening chords of the pianist's own composition, "Prelude in C Sharp Minor." Many a novice strained his ear to catch each faintest shading, and was to go home remembering carefully the composer's interpretation of the famous concert classic.

Two more encores followed: A Chopin waltz and Rimsky-Korsakov's "Flight of the Bumble Bee."

Programmed numbers included Haendel's "Variations, E Major," the Beethoven "Sonata in D Minor, Op. 31, No. 2," two Field selections, "Noon-Tide" and "Nocturne, G Major," the Bach-Rachmaninoff "Prelude," Chopin's "Valse" and "Tarantella," the pianist's own "Daisies," and "Oriental Sketch."

Leaves Before Audience

Mr. Rachmaninoff asked that no one be permitted back stage after the concert, to the disappointment of autograph seekers. He thanked stage hands graciously with the simple, smileless bow which characterized his stage appearance, and was gone before the house was empty.