

THE SAN FRANCISCO EXAMINER

Rachmaninoff Presents Program of Fantasies

By REDGERN MASON

(Reprinted from yesterday's late editions.)

A huge audience assembled to listen to Sergei Rachmaninoff at the Opera House last night. The auditorium proper was crowded from floor to ceiling and there were enough people on the stage to satisfy your average recitalist.

The eminent Slav, grave and self-indrawn as an Indian fakir, gave us a program entirely made up of fantasies. He started with an early work by Scriabine; he remembered

that Josef Haydn indulged in the form; we heard the Schumann Phantasiestucke. Then came the Chopin Fantasia, the so-called "Moonlight" Sonata of Beethoven, which is written "quasi fantasia," and finally the Liszt sentimentalization of the Francesca episode of the "Divina Commedia."

Rachmaninoff is what the French call a "cerebrale"; his emotions are intellectual. Never for a moment

do you feel that the music is running away with him. This makes for a restrained and delicate perfection; but there were moments when one longed for the whimsies of De Pachmann and the delicate irony of Iturbi.

But he gave a fine reading of the Chopin. He made it nostalgic and one wondered whether it did not convey his longings for that Russia from which he is practically exiled.

The Beethoven was a model of pianistic propriety. Perhaps Rachmaninoff remembered that the composer dedicated it first to one lady and then, when his volatile affections changed, dedicated it to another. The finale of the work was the best played. The opening movement lacked inevitability.