

## RACHMANINOFF'S ART SURPASSES SEASON'S BEST

Russian, Heard by Enthusiastic Audience, Is Chary With Encores

By Bernice Cosulich

Surpassing anything Tucson has heard, the program of Sergei Rachmaninoff, Russian pianist, marked the pinnacle of the Saturday Morning Musical club's presentations of the season. Though the auditorium was not packed, as it should have been, the enthusiasm of the audience and its deep attention were tributes to the master pianist and the foremost living Russian composer.

After a few brief passages in "Caprice, Air de Ballet," Saint-Saens' arrangement of Gluck's score for the opera "Alceste," one settled every faculty to catching the richness of color, harmonic effects and rhythmic variety of the pianist's interpretation. Throughout his program, which he played with only one brief intermission, Rachmaninoff was the quiet, reserved master of his instrument. Not for him the physical accompaniment of his forte passages with the sway of head or body, other than that wrought by flying arms, nor any eye-closed dreamy posture, for such dainty bits as Chopin's "Ballade" offered.

It is notable that the master chose the works of the famous triumvirate Schuman, Liszt and Chopin, who developed the utmost possibilities of the piano, for his program. Except for Rachmaninoff's own famous and beautiful "Prelude" with its six cathedral tones as the foundation motif, the most beautiful on the program was Chopin's "Ballade." One agrees with James Huneker in hearing it that "music steers straight for the soul through the cortical cells." The fineness of his playing in this may be likened only to delicate lace, the melody coming from beneath his fingers with magic ease, making a sweetly appealing selection, thrice applauded.

One caught the indescribably subtle turns, slides and trills of the violin in the "Scherzo" and "Etude" by Chopin and the Russian gave most adequately that feeling of spontaneous transposition of the ideal that the great Pole has in so much of his music.

Substituting his "Serenade" for the "Etude" listed, Rachmaninoff let the audience grow closer to him than at any time during the evening. The motif has a haunting Oriental quality of sheerest beauty and in it he found play for that delicately differentiated voice which each of his fingers possesses.

Liszt's two compositions "Sonetto del Petrarca" lyric in quality and "Polonaise" closed the program. The latter was sparkingly colorful, full of intricate runs given in that technical perfection that awed one all evening. The close is a tremendous thing.

Rachmaninoff's own instrument is splendid, but the tones he made the instrument give forth were wonderful. There was a booming resonance in many bass notes, notably his own "Prelude" that hung on the air even after the pedal released them and a melody was interspersed. In pianissimo effects the tones were fragile almost beyond belief and in Schumann's "Sonata" he obtained a shadowy quality that seemed to flit back and forth beyond the right hand melody.

No encores were played by the master until the close of the program and then only when the audience refused to leave its seats. He gave Chopin's "Waltz" C Sharp Minor and A Flat Major.