

Rachmaninoff's Concert Charms Local Audience

Great Musician and Composer Event of Season

By MARION BURROUGHS RHEA

Sergei Rachmaninoff, composer-pianist, appearing in concert here last night under the auspices of the Saturday Morning Musical club, justified the long series of eulogistic notices which preceded him, and won an ovation. Best known, perhaps, as a composer, Rachmaninoff does not need to rest upon these laurels in the future, for he indeed belongs to that exalted company known as master-pianists.

It did not take the artist's audience long last night to realize that it had come face to face with true art. He has all the technical facilities plus a command of tone color and nuance seldom witnessed. I have never heard such exquisite tones caressed from the treble, nor such sustained volume or support of theme from the bass.

Last night's program was one that seemed to grow upon its listeners. It was as if the artist paused at first to take us into his confidence, then swept us along with him to heights indescribable. A poet at the keyboard, especially in these days of so-called orchestral pianists, never fails to delight. And Rachmaninoff seems to understand the scope of his abilities. He could not have found anything better calculated to exhibit his powers than Schumann's Sonata in G-minor, its four movements offering opportunity for brilliancy and for the fine and clear lines of limpid music which characterize him as an etcher at the pianoforte.

Having heard much and splendid Chopin this year, Tucson's music lovers probably awaited Chopin at Rachmaninoff's hands with interested expectancy, as I did. And even in this, he seemed to project into his interpretations the creative spirit: to re-create as an expression of himself. It was genius interpreting genius. "Ballade," the last of the group, was the favorite, and the applause was insistent. But the quiet, dignified figure at the piano took the tributa almost shyly, and continued with his program, refusing encores until after the last number, when he played a Chopin waltz and another Chopin composition, "A Flat Major."

One must not forget in attempting to choose the best from a uniformly magnificent program, Rachmaninoff's own Beautiful "Prelude," through which his very soul seemed to speak. One thought not of artist nor piano, but realized only that a message in music was being conveyed. This was in reality true throughout the concert. It was Rachmaninoff, the poet, speaking, through the medium of the music which his own art made possible.