

FAMOUS PIANIST CHARMS WITH BEAUTY OF WORK

Sergei Rachmaninoff played in Phoenix last evening. It was more than a passing program by a great artist—it was a substantial contribution to the musical background of every one who listened—a thing which will not be lightly shaken off from the memory. Incidentally it is difficult to remember a more cordial reception accorded to a pianist or a performance marked by the significant moment of silence before the applause broke. This undoubtedly is the greatest tribute more to be desired than immediate demonstration in the eyes of the performer.

The program was chosen with discrimination. Rachmaninoff has acquired a knowledge of the tastes of the American music lovers to whom he has been more formally introduced in so pleasant a fashion through his compositions. He played his "prelude," the audience was eager to hear this in the hands of the composer. It would have been a keen disappointment had it been omitted from the program. A Chopin group, including rather familiar numbers, shone with a new brilliancy because of the interpretation—thing of beauty glowing as if from cleverly cut facets which reflected perfectly the lights and shades.

Rachmaninoff might have been playing in his own studio so unconscious did he seem of his audience in the Shrine auditorium. No mannerisms detract from his expressive hands and the twinkling fingers need no emphasis save the artist's conception of the varying moods played with convincing sincerity. He is gracious, acknowledging with obvious friendliness the appreciation of his listeners but again becomes the absorbed performer, to whom a worthy interpretation is of first importance.

The program was colorful and replete with lithesome touches. Rachmaninoff played with ease the most delicate passages each as outstanding as a bit of lace work filmy but definite in design. Again it was the majestic melody, strong and well marked, not thunderous but merely clear and dignified.

The moods of the music seem to be Rachmaninoff's own, sufficiently strong in suggestion to inspire sudden changes but never a contrast so sharp that there is a sacrifice of smoothness. It is the master touch—one recognizes it readily.

The artistry of Rachmaninoff cannot be described in mere words. It is difficult to express even the appreciation which the listeners felt as they heard the program of last evening. One felt the throb of inspiration which prompted the work, saw the colorings painted skilfully in tones of unusual beauty and, content to remember the satisfying interpretation, sought no further analysis.