

# SOCIETY

## Famous Russian Pianist and Composer Enthralls Members Of Civic Music Association

WITH the familiar "Prelude in C sharp minor" ringing in their ears, the vast throng which heard Sergei Rachmaninoff, celebrated Russian pianist and composer at the Orpheum theater last night left with the conviction and satisfaction of having heard one of the most distinguished personalities of the musical world.

Every seat was filled for the auspicious event which opened the season's artist course of the Civic Music association of the tri-cities. The audience of nearly 2,800 paid homage to the pianist, hesitant about leaving until he had played his well known prelude, and the opening chords were greeted with spontaneous applause.

It was interesting to hear the composer's own interpretation of the famous work, so often pounded and exploited by amateurs. Under his hands, it was a thing of beauty, a tone picture of bells, strong and sonorous, soft, sweet and echoing.

### Retains Musicianship

Time and illness have taken their toll from this artist since his last visit in Davenport some years ago. He has not the same erect carriage and vitality as he walks across the stage, but his long thin fingers are just as steel-like and agile, and his wrist is just as supple.

"Music cannot be just color and rhythm. It must reveal the emotions of the heart," Rachmaninoff is quoted as saying. And Rachmaninoff has much to say. An exile from his native land, he has tasted the bitterness of life as well as the ecstasy of success since his debut in America 30 years ago.

The program last night was one of sheer beauty from beginning to end, comprised of Bach, Chopin and Liszt numbers and one of his own compositions, all marked with a wealth of melody, depth of feeling or sparkling velocity.

### Interesting Program

It was one which "the tired business men" as well as the music student could enjoy to the utmost. Few will soon forget his rendition of the hauntingly beautiful "Liebestraum" by Liszt, given as an encore.

Many pianists have flashed across the horizon and have been forgotten, but Rachmaninoff still

remains one of the outstanding figures of the concert stage, still able to enthrall his audience.

He has, of course, technique, as evidenced last night, especially in the last movement of the Chopin sonata, Op. 58, considered one of the most intricate in music literature. Throughout his playing there was rhythmic exactitude, limpid runs and brittle arpeggios. But it was the crystal purity, the loveliness and singing tones which he lured from his instrument, his sense of tonal values and nuances of color which fascinated. There is a probing depth and an emotional power in his interpretations which stamp his consummate artistry and make his personality a potent force.

### Three Encores

The program last night was an exacting one and Rachmaninoff gave his best, playing with the sincerity of a true musician, never resorting to showmanship. It was only after much insistence that he returned to give three encores, the Liszt "Liebestraum," a Chopin number and his well-known prelude.

The next attraction on the artist course of the Civic Music association will be the celebrated negro contralto, Marion Anderson, who will make her second appearance in Davenport on Jan. 30.

## Chaminade Club

### To Have "Autumn"

#### Program Wednesday

"Autumn" is the theme of the program to be presented by members of the Chaminade club at the meeting scheduled for 2 p. m. Wednesday at the home of Mrs. Martin Silberstein of 114 Kirkwood boulevard, Davenport.

Those to appear on the program are Mrs. Frank Schunter, vocalist; Miss Barbara June Smith, violinist; Mrs. M. Silberstein, harpist; Mrs. P. D. Covert, pianist; and Mrs. E. D. Haroff and Mrs. H. O. Hansen, readers.

A special feature of the afternoon will be the singing of compositions written by Mrs. Gertrude Brannon of Muscatine, a member of Chaminade, with Mrs. Charles Nuehse, also of Muscatine, as