

Rachmaninoff Casts Spell Over Audience

Sincerity and Dignity Characterize His Playing

By THEODOLINDA C. BORIS

Sergei Rachmaninoff, one of the musical giants of our day, cast his familiar mesmeric spell Tuesday evening over a capacity audience in Kleinhans Music Hall.

The spell which the tall serious Russian pianist exercises stems from a profound and thoughtful immersion in the music, a brilliant technique of virtuosi dimensions and an enkindling re-creation of the inner meaning of the music. Very likely, Mr. Rachmaninoff would disdain the word "spell," lest it connote something sensational and dazzling rather than the absolute sincerity and dignity that characterize all his playing.

Patrician though he is, however, in demeanor and playing, Mr. Rachmaninoff is incurably romantic at heart—which is probably one of the reasons why he is a beloved and revered musical figure. But it is no pale and perfumed romanticism that breathes forth in his pianistic art. It is a spirit manly, authoritative and ever unostentatiously master of superb resources of tonal color and dynamics.

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Perhaps there have been evenings when the artist was more completely in the vein, but there were many treasurable moments during Tuesday evening. There was the sensitive, almost improvisational interpretation of the Bach-Liszt Prelude and Fugue in A minor; there was the restrained and poetic reading of the Beethoven "Appassionata" Sonata, its Andante coming like a burst of gentle sunlight between the two Allegros.

There were the enchanting interpretations of the lovely, romantic Schubert Impromptu in A flat minor, and the delightful Liszt transcription of Schubert's song, "Die Forelle" (The Trout).

The peak of the evening came in the group of four Chopin etudes—C sharp minor, E minor, A minor and C minor—the seventh, fifth, fourth and 12th in Opus 25. Of these the C sharp minor and the C minor were the most telling—the former for its very subjective enunciation and the latter for its climatic power.

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Other items were Mr. Rachmaninoff's own Etude-Tableau in A minor, and three etudes by Liszt—D flat major (Un Sospiro); Waldesrauschen and Gnomenreigen.

Legend has it that the pianist isn't particularly fond of his famous C sharp minor Prelude. Be that as it may, he generously offered it as the first of his several encores, to the delight of the majority of his listeners.

The highly enthusiastic audience applauded the pianist warmly. Mr. Rachmaninoff was presented by Mrs. Zorah B. Berry.