

RUSSIAN PIANIST CHARMS AUDIENCE

Packed Audience at Savoy Hears Rachmaninoff Play at Celebrity Concert

Sergel Rachmaninoff, world-famous Russian pianist-composer, gave a recital in the Savoy theatre last night at the second of the current series of Celebrity concerts. The theatre was crowded, the sold-out sign being put out long before the concert was billed to begin, and those fortunate enough to have secured seats had an evening of rare artistic enjoyment.

Mr. Rachmaninoff is tall and of commanding presence. Somewhat austere in appearance, his face is not expressive of his emotions. But he could hardly fail to be gratified by the very warm response of the audience to his brilliant display of pianistic virtuosity.

If his face is not expressive his fingers certainly are and he fairly made the piano sing. The music he had chosen for his program was drawn from the era when music was melodious rather than cacophonous. The only modern represented on the program was himself by his Etude Tableau. For the rest he drew upon Bach, Beethoven, Chopin, Schubert and Liszt, playing with rare musical understanding and interpretative power.

Delicacy of Tone

The opening number, Organ Prelude and Fugue in A Minor (Bach-Liszt), gave the audience an immediate foretaste of the quality of his expressiveness. The exquisitely delicate grading of tone and the variety of nuance he introduced made this work one of undiminished interest from start to finish.

Beethoven's Appassionata Sonata was the most considerable work on the program and of this Mr. Rachmaninoff gave a very personal, yet satisfying performance. He did it no violence though he played with a fine fire and impetuosity for a man of 67 years. The slow movement was beautifully done.

A Chopin group—four of the Etudes—comprised those in C Sharp Minor, E Minor, A Minor and C Minor. These were played in a masterly manner, calling as they did for sensitivity of feeling, delicacy of touch and brilliant technical equipment. The familiar Schubert Impromptu in A Flat Minor and Liszt's transcription of Schubert's Die Forelle formed another enjoyable group.

As his concluding group Mr. Rachmaninoff played three Etudes by Liszt—those in D Flat Major, The Song of the Woods, and Dance of the Gnomes. In response to the enthusiastic applause of the audience at the end the artist then gave his interpretation of an oft-murdered composition—the Prelude in C Sharp Minor (Rachmaninoff).

Utterly indefensible was the nuisance created by late arrivals, who trooped in by scores after the distinguished artist had taken his seat at the piano, and again after he had played his first number. N. C. C.