

Rachmaninoff Displays Perfection of Pianism

(By ISABEL TURNBULL.)

Some people claim there is no such thing as absolute perfection, but the capacity audience which listened to Sergei Rachmaninoff in Eaton Auditorium Thursday night was convinced that it heard perfect piano music. It was a rich and memorable experience to be there, and an ovation lasting several minutes was given the artist when he finished playing.

Rachmaninoff is now 67 years old, but has changed little in appearance in the last twenty years. Though he moves more slowly across the platform, his characteristically close-cropped hair is still dark, his carriage still erect. In one respect he looks younger—his face has lost the grim, haunted expression it used to wear when he was closer to the Russian revolution. He is still grave and serious, and never quite smiled at his audience, but there is an undercurrent of friendliness in his attitude. Every year has contributed to his interpretive powers, and the fleet-

"Life of a Cowboy," shown at Pastor's. It covers a wide range of subjects and the locale seems to be really the Western plains. The picture runs from a Western mining camp barroom to the arrival of a stage coach at a ranch with "tenderfeet" aboard, for whose delectation trick lariat throwing is introduced, followed by the holding up of the coach by Indians. The abduction of a young girl, the chase by the cowboys through pretty woods and rolling fields to the recapture of the girl, and the tragic finale where an Indian girl shoots a murderous bad man silently crawling up on the lover of the white girl. The series is so melodramatic in treatment that it acted on the audience like a vivid play."

The length of motion pictures seemed to worry Sime, for in a contemporary review of "An Exciting Honeymoon" which ran for the great length of seven minutes, he observes that "the audience remained in its seats until the close."

Sime should have sat through "GWTW!"

ness of his fingers was the despair and delight of local pianists.

No artist could be self-effacing. Rachmaninoff uses his prodigious technique, his architectural sense of form, his sensitive feeling for color, and his composer's careful attention to minute detail for the sole purpose of conveying ideas or emotions. There is a feeling of passionate conviction and artistic honesty which impressed the audience from the first notes, establishing a rare and unusual bond of sympathy. Whether he was fiery and forceful, lyric and poetic, it seemed that here was a recreation of what the composer had meant. Also notable in his recital was a wealth of melody, lovingly emphasized.

The magnificent Bach-Liszt Organ Prelude and Fugue in A minor opened the program, combining strength, delicacy and brilliant clarity. Beethoven's Sonata Appassionata was moving, yet essentially dignified. The powerfully persuasive rhythms of the first movement were exciting, there was bold sweep of line and lavish use of color. Eloquent melodies sang straight to the heart in the slow movement, the allegro was vigorous and stormy, with majestic precision of mighty chords. Schubert's Impromptu in A flat minor was romantic in mood, played with dazzling speed and airy lightness. Another feast of melody was Liszt's arrangement of Schubert's "Trout," in which the lovely tune flashed in and out against a changing background of liquid, iridescent tone.

Rachmaninoff's own Etude-Tableau presented tempestuous rhythms and sombre color. Four Chopin Etudes were varied in mood, including that in C sharp minor, with its vivid contrasts; the paradoxical, bitter-sweet E minor; the brilliant, intriguing A minor, and the C minor, with its noble melody etched against elaborate settings. Three Liszt Etudes were a riot of color and brilliance. Song of the Woods presented brooding mystery in addition to bird song and sunshine.

Encores included a delicious Chopin waltz and a scintillating transcription of Rimsky-Korsakoff's "Flight of the Bumble Bee." It is notable that Rachmaninoff's Prelude in C sharp minor was not played. At last audiences are beginning to believe that he is tired of it.