

Rachmaninoff Receives Big Ovation at Notable Concert

By MAE SAUNDERS

NO pianist is more persuasive at the piano than Sergel Rachmaninoff who performed here last night to almost 1600 hearers at the Fox theater under the banner of the Kern County Musical Association. Being persuasive with his gifts means that he has an utter fidelity to musical thought of the composer with whom he is engaged and he is possessed of that inner intellectual fire that illuminates even the tiniest pianissimo passages or makes luminous tremendous passages such as the audience heard in the Chopin C Sharp minor Etude or in his first encore his own C Sharp Minor Prelude.

No pianist here has ever received a greater ovation than that given to Rachmaninoff last night.

Triumph of Simplicity

Highlight of the evening was the Beethoven Sonata, Opus 10, No. 3, in which the Rachmaninoff gifts of interpreter produced resplendent effect that only great simplicity and meaning can bestow. Its humorous and gay opening theme and the massive thoughtful enunciation of the second movement that become so beautifully intertwined and interdependent in the menuetto have fresheners and beauty and the content was set forth as lucidly as a good reader can a narrative and philosophical poem. The largo of the Sonata with its grave and lovely melody might have remained the favorite proportion of the sonata if the rondo, built so skillfully about the two themes, had not provided the climax and enrichment so movingly. Rachmaninoff apparently has the humility of the great artist, making himself completely subservient to the demands of the composer, and yet it is his understanding, fidelity to phrase and mood and intention that makes recreation of such works achievements stamped with his own individual approach.

Brilliant Interpretation

What are mere glissandos or brilliant passage work to contemporary artists of great gifts are for Rachmaninoff the opportunity to elucidate musical thought without losing any of the swift sheen of tonal color.

For this reason, possibly none in the audience had ever heard the Bach-Liszt "Organ Prelude" and "Fugue in A Minor" emerge with more vitality. It was a happy opening to the evening and indicated the mood of the evening's program, well-rounded happy music, impregnated with poetry and occasionally tinged with charming fantasies. Of the latter, of course, was Rachmaninoff's own "Humoresque." If the pianist seems cold, unsmiling and austere to his audience, he does smile musically and understands charm of drolleries.

Chopin Charms

His rare understanding set forth the four Chopin Etudes in brilliant style and the versatility of his mind was reflected in their choice, each differed in mood, but blended subtly as a whole group. The first the C Sharp Minor with its bell toll opening, quietly thoughtful and

reminiscent in mood, was sharply contrasted to the E Minor which always reminds this reviewer of the raucous garrulity of an old woman quarrelling with her husband until he picks up an instrument and plays a sweet melody on it and then the sharp admonitions die into a subdued recognition of his gifts. The swift rushing rhythm of the A Minor, a pleasing interlude, was a fitting introduction into the compelling crescendos of the C Minor with its mighty, billowing rhythms.

In some programs it seems easy to skip over selections without mentioning some of them, but a Rachmaninoff program is a series of gems and such were the Schubert Impromptu in A Flat minor and the Schubert "The Trout," which again illustrated the pianist luminosity in providing tone, color, rhythm in flashing style.

Selective Group

The program was concluded with the three Liszt Etudes, the D Flat major, a charming insertion, the "Song of the Woods," not just prettily sylvan in mood but descriptive also of woods that are touched by the smash of storm, and finally the droll little "Dance of the Gnomes." Good taste of the pianist led him to these poetically charming works of Liszt instead of to the larger, pyrotechnical and sometimes meaningless ones.

Although the pianist gave a few encores, he cut applause short throughout the evening, keeping steadfastly at the piano. His presentation of the Rimsky Korsakoff "Flight of the Bumble Bee" ended the concert a little too abruptly for the enthusiastic audience that was eager for more of the Rachmaninoff magic. The artist's visit to Bakersfield was brief, as he arrived just in time for the concert and left immediately afterwards. He was accompanied by Madame Rachmaninoff, who sat in the wings of the stage throughout the concert.

Valentine Party Shared by Class

Refreshments were in a St. Valentine's motif when Warner class of First Methodist Church met Tuesday night at the home of Mrs. E. W. Braddon, 354 Balsam street, La Cresta. Mrs. Alfred Siemon is the teacher. Mrs. I. C. Baker led devotions and Mrs. W. H. Holman conducted a short business meeting.

Hostesses were Mesdames Fred Smith, I. C. Baker, J. T. Lightner, E. W. Braddon, Cora Miller and Carrie Timmons.

Others attending were Mesdames Helen Richardson, Eloida Gray, Ada Smith, Lucia Tallman, Elizabeth Saecker, Ella Gilbert, Rosa Marks, Ruth Shoemaker, Mae Paynter, Rose Hillhouse, F. J. Mulvana, Grover Ralston, W. H. Holman, J. F. Jensen, J. C. Wattenbarger, E. R. Long, Irwin Coats, G. P. Higgins, Rollo Grainger, Alfred Siemon, Paul Adams, Hugh Smith and Miss Cecile Roberts.