

## THE MUSICAL SCENE

# Mail From Beethoven

Rachmaninoff played Beethoven's Sonata Appassionata.

The tall, stooped Russian whose grizzled, close-cropped head and venerably wrinkled visage make him look like the big brother of the High Lama of Shanngrila, did various other things last night to the grandiose piano which practically filled the Moore stage, and to the audience which belatedly did the same thing for the Moore theater auditorium. But just to hear Rachmaninoff—among the eldest of a group of vanishing musical giants—play this heroic and mighty work would have been an eventful evening in itself. The rest of his program was clear profit for Cecilia Schultz' customers.

Rachmaninoff's uncompromisingly forceful playing has always been a riddle to me until now. In his all-out performance of the great Beethoven Appassionata last night I think I got the answer to the riddle, and it goes something like this:

Music is a special form of communication between mortals that cuts behind the lines of speech and concrete things, enabling us to swap moods and impulses deeper than words or ideas. Performing musicians are the couriers who carry the message to Garcia—you and me. The messages that reach us inevitably take on something of the coloring and character of the personality thru whom they are transmitted.

Rachmaninoff is the sort of musical messenger who can bring a great message from the highest mountains of the land and deliver it thru fire and flood. His galloping, steely stride is sac- wasted in transporting tonal pictures of buttercups and bluebirds, or adolescent writhings. And Beethoven's Sonata Appassionata, despite its title, is no exposition of boy-meets-girl pash, but the passion of a great man's soul grappling with the ultimate problems of being and

purpose. Give Rachmaninoff such a stern and powerful message to deliver, and you're in for a musical experience as exciting as the siege of Atlanta in the movies.

The rest of Rachmaninoff's current program, in contrast to last year's Seattle offerings, which seemed in large part outside his natural field, was well keyed to the Beethoven centerpiece, ranging from merely serious to richly somber and stupendous beauty.

The list included a warm set of Mozart Variations, the Bach-Liszt A minor Organ Prelude and Fugue, Mendelssohn's glittering Ron-do Capriccioso, a Chopin Nocturne and two Mazurkas, three of Rachmaninoff's own highly dramatic and impressive works, Liszt's richly reflective Sonnets of Petrarch and the same composer's bounding Rhapsody No. 11.

Three encores, hoarded to the end of the concert, included the pianist's own played-to-death but inseparable C sharp minor Prelude, and Rimsky-Korsakoff's Bumble Bee.

The pianist administered a sharp dose of humiliation to the unusually large herd of dawdling customers who arrived late, by sitting at his piano and looking on with feigned tolerance as they fumbled for their seats.

GILBERT BROWN.

## Hal Roach Not To Get Divorce

HOLLYWOOD — Producer Hal Roach and his estranged wife, Mrs. Marguerite Roach, will not be divorced, Mrs. Roach's attorney indicated today as they dismissed her suit for separate maintenance.

They will continue to live separately, however, under a property settlement giving Mrs. Roach one-third of the producer's income, with a guarantee of \$1250 a month. She also received an interest in his holdings.