

Rachmaninoff

By WELDON WALLACE

As he walked slowly, laboriously onto the stage, his body seemed to bear the weight of a great sadness.

He did not smile. Wisdom and dignity were in his face, but his eyes were tired as he looked out at the audience that had assembled in the Lyric to hear him play.

He touched the keyboard.
Presto!

A young man sat at that piano. The strings sang; they flashed; they roared.

Age was present in the playing, but only to add to the interpretations a depth of thought, a maturity powerful enough to recreate—as from fresh materials—great music.

Thus, was Rachmaninoff last night.

Purists who play the piano with measured strictness of tradition and musty correctness might learn much from this pianist.

He has the courage to take liberties, and yet he does not mar the style or distort the symmetry of the music he interprets.

Virtually, Rachmaninoff made a new piece out of the Variations from Mozart's "Sonata in A Major." The phrases became more than design. He brought out new tonal relationships and discovered fresh beauty in music that is often performed in a tasteless way.

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Yet, for all the freedom of the playing, its crystalline, ornamental qualities provided an authentic eighteenth century background for the ideas of Mozart.

Freshness of spirit and expressiveness were also apparent in the Beethoven "Sonata in C Minor, Opus 111," the last in his series of thirty-two—bold, strange music that follows its own laws of key and phrase patterns.

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And so the remainder of the evening. There was the romance of a Liszt sonnet-after-Petrarch; the dazzle of the same composer's "Eleventh Hun-

garian Rhapsody." There were vivid realizations of Chopin (a nocturne and two mazurkas).

Rachmaninoff himself was represented in transcription and original compositions. The pianist has given a fine three-movement suite to the piano repertoire in his arrangement of the Bach "Sonata in E Major," for unaccompanied violin. The embroidery he has added is both pianistically effective and in the best of taste.

Of his original compositions (three) the less said the better. Only the "Daisies" proved attractive, and that mostly for the way it was played.

Encores were the Schubert-Liszt "Serenade," "Smugglers" (Schumann-Tausig) and, of course, that prelude, which Rachmaninoff hoped the audience would forget, but which applause, stamps and whistles made it impossible for him to ignore.

TODAY'S LUNCHEON & DINNER TREAT

Served 10:30 A. M. to 7 P. M.

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40^c

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