

# Rachmaninoff, Playing Magnificently, Warms Hearts of Pittsburgh Audience

Pianist's Playing Evokes Enthusiastic Response as He Shows Undiminished Technical Powers And Eloquent Expression at Recital

By RALPH LEWANDO  
Press Music Critic

One can always relax in anticipation of the artistic enjoyment that Serge Rachmaninoff's piano playing is always sure to provide. Last night in Syria Mosque the noted Muscovite musician gave a recital that warmed the hearts of a large audience and evoked enthusiastic response.

When he came upon the stage for the opening number

Mr. Rachmaninoff was tended a prolonged ovation. With his customary immobile features he approached the piano, sat down unostentatiously and immediately launched into the playing of our national anthem. This was given with fervor, power and harmonic treatment rousing in effect.



Then came the program, comprising works of Bach, Beethoven, Schumann, Chopin, Rachmaninoff and Liszt—a typical lineup of composers whose fullest intent was set forth with undiminished technical powers and eloquent expression.

Of Bach Mr. Rachmaninoff chose his own transcription of three sections from the E-major violin partita of seven movements. These

were the Prelude that scuds along from beginning to end without a break, the Gavotte and the final Gigue.

### Fine Control Shown

The beauty of these pieces and their innate harmonic possibilities have been skillfully exploited in the finest musical traditions and constitute excellent keyboard numbers.

Of course, Mr. Rachmaninoff played these arrangements with fine control and interpretative expression, although the Gigue was taken at a speed that made it difficult for the ear to catch the notes, despite the clean cut fingering.

The ensuing Beethoven sonata, opus 31, No. 2 was re-created with magnificent style, superb tonal quality and exquisite phrasing. Here was playing of superior order. The opening Allegro with its frequently occurring recitative phrases that intersperse the flow of tempo was an incomparable effort; the Adagio was revealed in the fullness of its poetic loveliness and the concluding Allegretto was matchless in its graceful presentation.

### Gusto Marks Performance

Came Schumann's F-sharp minor Novelette, a favorite of the player. Gusto and vitality marked its performance. The three ensuing Chopin pieces included the F-minor Ballade, F-sharp major Nocturne and A-flat Valse. Each of these items is part and parcel of a pianist's repertory. They are played time and again, although not with the spirit with which they were invested on this occasion. To his Chopin performance Mr. Rachmaninoff brings a vitality that lifts it far above the ordinary plane of

sentimentality that so many pianists indulge in.

Heard here for the first time were Mr. Rachmaninoff's Four Etude Tableaux that should become favorites with pianists. Each is a tonal gem redolent with the fine and inspiring ideas of the greatest composer-pianist of our time.

### Liszt Works Played

The B-minor etude is vigorous and vertical in harmonic treatment. The E-flat minor etude is a contrasting melody clothed in undulating figuration that supplies accompaniment. The A-minor etude is in agitated mood and the final D-major etude is in a driving tempo with a contrasting lighter section that is rich in harmonic content.

Most of the works of Franz Liszt have lost the glamor they held in the days of their inception. Many of them are superficial. This term we apply to the three numbers that concluded the recital, namely, the Valse Oubliee, Sonetto del Petrarca and the Venice and Naples Tarantella.

The music of these pieces is trite and shallow. They demand technical attainment to be sure, and Mr. Rachmaninoff played them with rare virtuosity, yet even his amazing fingers and innate musical style could not raise these numbers above their limitations.

## Shows to See And When

**NIXON**—"This Is the Army"  
Irving Berlin production with cast of 300 soldiers. Curtain at 8:30.

**FULTON**—"Flying Tigers"  
John Wayne, Anna Lee, John Carroll. Feature at 11:18, 1:29, 3:40, 5:51, 8:02, 11:13.

**STANLEY**—"You Can't Escape Forever"



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### COMBAT INSIGNIA

HOLLYWOOD, Cal.—Mickey Mouse, Pluto, Donald Duck and the rest of the family are in demand as insignia for the armed forces. The Disney staff goes to