

Rachmaninoff Attains Climax At Concert

In his concert Wednesday night Sergei Rachmaninoff reached a climax in the artistry displayed in years of fine Artists' Course performers. We had heard him perform many times in years past, and admittedly went to the concert with slight misgivings and a hope that he would equal what we had heard 10 or 20 years ago. He did. At an age when many performers have passed their peak of perfection and are willing to coast along with numbers requiring less technical dexterity than those formerly played, Rachmaninoff tackled a program requiring a vigorous approach. His stage entrances and exits showed his age; his playing contradicted it.

When flaws are absent from a performance the only way left to comment is to pick out the most outstanding parts of the recital. The virility of his playing amazed us, and in no department can we find fault. However, we were particularly impressed with his legato passages, when he seemed to draw from the piano a tone better than the instrument is capable of producing.

The program was so organized that it had appeal to all types of listeners, from those who are trained pianists to those who went to the concert so that they could say years hence: "When I heard Rachmaninoff . . . From the exactness of Bach through the refined romanticism of Mendelssohn and his contemporaries to the orchestral pianism of Liszt and the nationalistic vigor of Moussorgsky there was an appeal for all. And Mr. Rachmaninoff treated each composer with a fine sense of his period and style. Perhaps it is because of our particular fondness for Bach and Wagner that we felt that it was in those numbers that the performance reached its peak. When a pianist can give one a distinct feel of the Wagnerian orchestration of *The Magic Fire* music it seems to us he is accomplishing something a little beyond human achievement.

We only hope that Mr. Rachmaninoff did not feel that the State College audience had to hear his C-sharp Minor Prelude!

—H. F.