

Rachmaninoff's Art Compelling, Beautiful

The concert last evening in the Memorial Auditorium by Sergei Rachmaninoff must have made everyone who heard it realize the feebleness and futility of words in trying to describe the beauty and subtlety of the pianist's great talent.

As one listened to Rachmaninoff, everything was forgotten in the sheer beauty and dignity of the music. A certain impressive serenity abides in his playing and demonstrates that in the midst of the world's conflict "the race of man cannot become entirely a prey to the world's vicious folly" as long as such art as his endures.

As a composer and an artist he is a product of the "Golden Age" and his individual pianism has been taken for granted. Whoever enjoys music of the classical and romantic schools is sure to find congenial response in his recitals.

From the opening of the program with the Bach "Partita" in E major for violin alone, transcribed for piano by Rachmaninoff, the distinction of the pianist's style was obvious; accents were determined and incisive; phrases were slowly etched; the tones were singing; all rhythms were sure and steady.

Schumann Number Sensitive.

Some might not agree with Rachmaninoff's reading of the Bach in point of technical style and coloring, but the music of Bach was never lost, but sang out sharp and clear. The Beethoven Sonata Opus 31, No. 2, received a convincing and eloquent interpretation.

One of the most exquisite and sensitive numbers of the evening was Schumann's "Novellette" in F sharp minor, which was followed by Chopin's "Nocturne" in F sharp, another delectable and beguiling song. Cho-

pin's C minor scherzo had wings like colorful wisps of light.

There was nothing to add to the beauty of the Schumann or the joy of the Chopin save the gratitude of the audience for a rarely beautiful musical experience.

The second part of the program included the B minor and D major "Tableaux Etudes" and the G Major Prelude by Rachmaninoff. For many listeners the most eagerly awaited part of the program was that devoted to Rachmaninoff's own compositions. It is always interesting and exciting to hear a composer interpret his own works, and the performance of these little studies manifestly pleased the audience.

The final group was devoted to the works of Liszt. Although Rachmaninoff played the "Sonetto del Petrarca" with poetry and distinction, his art of playing is naturally heroic and there was little in common with the ornate decorations of the Liszt compositions. Nevertheless, Rachmaninoff did some superb Liszt playing that glowed with splendor of color and rhetorical style.

Technically, the Liszt "Venezia e Napoli" nearly took one's breath away. It was a whirlwind for speed and a test even for the technic of Rachmaninoff, but if Liszt is to be played so that it pleases one, there is no other pianist living who can do it but Rachmaninoff.

The applause was tumultuous and several encores were added. It was an evening of beautiful music masterfully played.

F. E. C.