

MUSIC LOVERS CAPTIVATED BY RACHMANINOFF

Program of Bach, Chopin, Beethoven, Liszt and Own Compositions Thrills Big Crowd at Cathedral.

BY CORA McRAE.

A master, Sergei Rachmaninoff, sat at a concert grand piano in the Scottish Rite Cathedral Thursday night and played a program of Bach, Beethoven, Chopin, Liszt and his own composition to the delight of a capacity house.

It was an audience made up of debutantes of the season, of students, a surprising number of men, of musicians, many of the faces not regularly seen at musical affairs. It was definitely a Rachmaninoff audience, an audience out to hear the great composer himself, rather than just an evening of piano music, first-class though it was bound to be.

This most romantic of all the great living pianists gave them a musical experience not soon to be forgotten, and the applause at times was deafening. Seated at the piano, he has a distinguished profile. He is dignified, but his face, deeply lined and homely in full view, is kindly and gentle.

Waltz Is Substituted.

Words fail to reach the elevation of spirit felt with Mr. Rachmaninoff's interpretation of Beethoven's Sonata No. 3, especially the slow movement, or the singing quality he put into the Organ Fantasia and Fugue in G Minor by Bach. Immediately following these came the Chopin group in which M. Rachmaninoff substituted Chopin's Waltz in E Flat Major for the Polonaise listed on the program. The Nocturne in D Flat Major, considered generally one of Chopin's most beautiful nocturnes, and aspired to by most students, was beautiful beyond comparison.

Musicians say Mr. Rachmaninoff's pieces are hard to play because, for one reason, the artist's hand is so much larger than the average hand. He played a group of three of his own compositions with a dash and brilliance which carried his audience with him. The first of the group, the G Minor, thrilling and complex, electrified his audience. In fact, the latter half of the program called forth more and more applause as it progressed. Whether this was because the audience wanted to hear two familiar pieces, the Magic Fire from Wagner and C Sharp Prelude, played by a master, or whether this was the program preference, was hard to determine. At any rate, these two pieces received a tremendous acclaim.

Final Encore Refused.

It was not possible to get his last encore for the pianist slipped away immediately after his program to his hotel suite, where he refused to answer the telephone. On concert tours, he stays quietly to himself so that on the stage he can give his very best to his audience.

The concert showed again definitely that the public responds to the best. This time, the master was a pianist. He received almost breathless attention throughout the evening.

Mrs. Edna W. Saunders, under whose management Mr. Rachmaninoff played, had to put extra chairs in the balcony, which was sold out early in the afternoon.