

Rachmaninoff's Piano Artistry Acclaimed by Philharmonic Patrons

By RICHARD D. SAUNDERS

The amazing pianistic virtuosity of Sergei Rachmaninoff won peals of applause from a thoroughly approbative audience gathered in the Philharmonic Auditorium last

night to hear his first concert on the Behymer series. His prodigious technical equipment made apparently simple work of an exacting program. Cool and reserved, as always, the pianist responded austere to the plaudits, and declined to give but four encores at the conclusion of the program, after which he closed the piano lid with finality.

Rachmaninoff is a virtuoso of the old school, playing exclusively works of the past century, apart from his own compositions. And even these latter are musically of the past century, as well. His playing and his compositions belong in the same category, their essence being refinement and elegance of style, with perfect control and sense of balance, but with sternly repressed emotion.

Strangely enough, his most appealing work was in his Chopin group, beginning with the c-minor Polonaise and extending by way of a Nocturne and Mazurka to the Rondo, Op. 16. His nicety of perception and acuteness of taste made his renditions models of polished pianism, and an underlying emotion was perceptible in the Polonaise, although his was a chromium-plated Chopin, brilliantly surfaced, yet giving little hint as to what lay beneath.

Four of his own "Etudes-Tableaux" from Op. 33 were exceedingly well groomed exercises. That in c-sharp-minor was tumultuous, that in g-minor a rather Mendelssohnian song without words, that in e-flat-minor rhythmic and showy, and that in E-flat-major of burnished brilliance. Among the encores were his own transcriptions of the Moussorgsky "Hopak" and "Rimsky-Korsakoff's "Flight of the Bumble-Bee," done with tremendous keyboard dexterity.

The opening Bach-Liszt Organ Fantasia and Fugue in g-minor held too much pedal in the Fantasia, but the Fugue was clean-cut, although very serious. In the Beethoven Sonata, Op. 109, he seemed to be making a virtue of necessity, playing the notes with exactitude, but neglecting the emotional content. In Brassin's transcription of Wagner's "Magic Fire" music, Rachmaninoff apparently considered that Wotan had called, not upon Loge, but upon Thor with his hammers. In the concluding Paganini-Liszt Etude, "La Chasse," he missed its jollity, and concentrated upon mechanical smoothness that left the impression of a pianola record.

Rachmaninoff will be heard in another program in the Philharmonic Auditorium on Saturday afternoon.

REVIEWS OF PREVIEWS

By JAMES FRANCIS CROW

"OUTCAST"

A Paramount picture. Directed by Robert Florey. Screen play by Doris Malloy and Dore Schary from an original story by Frank R. Adams. Photographed by Rudolph Maté. The cast: Warren William, Karen Morley, Lewis Stone, Jackie Moran, Esther Dale, John Wray, Christian Rub, Virginia Sale, Ruth Robinson, Murray Kinnell, Jonathan Hale, Richard Carle, Frank Mellon, Lois Wilde, Tommy Jackson, Matthew Betz, Harry Woods, George Magrill, Dick Alexander. Previewed at the Fox Ritz Theater.

"Outcast" continues the screen attack on bigotry which was begun in such other hard-hitting dramas as "Fury" and "Black Legion."

This time the story is about a doctor who becomes, first, the target of planned and persistent revenge for a fancied wrong, and, secondly, the victim of ignorance and superstition. At the end he becomes the principal in a near-fatal lynching party—for the second time accused of murder.



LEWIS STONE

Made on a small but well spent budget, and designed primarily for unpretentious program exhibition, "Outcast" generates surprising dramatic power, and is likely to be a far more successful picture than its producers expected it to be. At least two episodes are memorable for their sharp dramatic impact. One is the scene in which an aged attorney, himself at death's door, conducts his last and best case in pleading with a "jury" of lynch mobsters for the life of his doctor-friend. The other is the scene in which an ignorant and tyrannous woman, angered at the doctor's benefaction to her son, jerks thoughtlessly from the child's throat the tube through which he is drawing his life's breath.

Warren William has the doctor's role, handling the part effortlessly. Karen Morley, first his enemy and then his sweetheart, is the girl in the doctor's life, and her performance advances the welcome comeback of a charming and gifted actress. But the most notable portrayal is that given by Lewis Stone.

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