

## Rachmaninoff Digs Nuggets of Gold From Piano

BY REED HYNDS.

Serge Rachmaninoff dug nuggets of pure romantic gold from his piano at Municipal Auditorium yesterday, provoking the longest and loudest applause of the season. The audience was not large, but it was vociferous. In it sat Fritz Kreisler, applauding with the rest, so one of the encores turned out to be a brilliant pianistic version of the violinist's "Liebeslied," and everyone was happy.

Mr. Rachmaninoff was in top form. Tall and spare of figure, his face an enigmatic mask, he looked about the hall as though in mild wonder when the coughing and program-futtering did not subside after his first number. From that point, however, he seemed to generate artistic energy increasingly, until the encores were given off in a blaze of fine virtuosity.

Any consideration of Rachmaninoff's art must take into account the curiously individual thing that it is. Whatever he plays has the stamp of his personality. Objection may be taken to his interpretation of a work, but under his hands it seems right. His persuasive artistry compels the listener to accept his conceptions.

This magic of his may be the result of strong artistic convictions which inevitably bring organic fullness and vitality to all that he touches. But one can hardly avoid the feeling that here is a man of supernatural power, with the radiant certitude of a St. Francis, the passionate intensity of a man possessed, the blinding force of a man of iron will. Rachmaninoff is more than a pianist. He is an inspired guide to a world of beauty—a world all the more remarkable because it is his own creation.

Yesterday's program could have been performed before gas foot lamps, with horses hitched to carriages outside. The year might well have been 1900. Nothing would have been different. Rachmaninoff would have taken his audience through the same works, lighted them with the same incandescence, given them the same orchestral sonority and tonal richness, made them just as rhapsodically romantic and luxuriously velvety.

For neither as performer nor as composer has Rachmaninoff made any concessions to the twentieth century. The S's—Scriabin, Stravinsky, Schoenberg, Sibelius—might just as well never have existed, so far as his compositions are concerned. Of the preludes he played yesterday, the B-minor was delicately nocturnal in character but definitely last century in construction; the energetic A-minor, Chopinesque G-minor and etude-like B-flat, all had the feeling of a slightly Russianized romanticism. None had anything to do with the twentieth century.

The Beethoven Sonata (Opus 31, No. 2) lacked the special kind of intellectual — emotional expressiveness which Artur Schnabel and other contemporary pianists give it, but had its own measure of restrained sentiment and Rachmaninoffian lusciousness of sound. Bach's badly mis-named Italian Concerto, in Rachmaninoff's interpretation was a glittering web of sharply etched tone and only incidentally emotionally arresting.

More dramatic, in its way, was the Chopin Scherzo in C-sharp Minor. Curiously, the surface agitation of this piece was rendered valid in a way that the Beethoven and Bach were not. Curiously, because Rachmaninoff seems of the introspective mold to dig deep into the thoughts of a Beethoven or a Bach. Men of genius, I suppose, are always men of paradoxes, too.

Often Rachmaninoff seems to be concentrating almost wholly on the sensuousness of tone he can evoke. This was especially marked in his show pieces. In Liszt's "Sonnetto del Petrarca," this resulted in a singing lyricism of the most engaging order. In the Wagner-Liszt "Spinning Song" (from "Flying Dutchman"), and in the Wagner-Brassin "Magic Fire" music, tones of all colors flew like hot sparks from an anvil. Rachmaninoff revealing that, if his artistry had not evolved since 1900, he could play as rapidly, cleanly and brilliantly as he could at the turn of the century.

Shambling back onto the stage to take one of many bows, Rachmaninoff, looking more austere and monk-like than ever, again looked at the audience with faint curiosity, as though to ask: "What has caused all this?" and somberly, unsmilingly, retired.



SERGEI RACHMANINOFF

### Fatted Calf

HOLLYWOOD, Nov. 15.—Because she broke her ankle some years ago, Miriam Hopkins, blond star of "Women Have a Way," learned to dance to strengthen her leg muscles, thus cultivating a taste for the theater.

### Ribbons to Reels

HOLLYWOOD, Nov. 15. — Lupe Velez, vivacious Mexican actress currently appearing with Wheeler and Woolsey in "High Flyers," worked as a shop girl in Mexico City's largest department store before going on the stage.

FOX  
HURRY  
LAST  
DAY!

GAGS • GALS • SONGS

SCORES OF OTHERS

JA  
"AR

RAYE • • • LOUIS ARMSTRONG • • •

\*IDA LUI