

## RACHMANINOFF PRELUDE WINS

BY E. CLYDE WHITLOCK.

Sergei Rachmaninoff, playing for the first time in this city last night, found an audience in fine fettle, an audience traditionally appreciative of pianists and deporting itself in normal form accordingly. The famous pianist was presented in the Municipal Auditorium as its first attraction of the season by the Fort Worth Civic Music Association, and the audience included many out-of-town pianists.

The lank, solemn-visaged Russian may have the outward mien of an implacable and avenging fate, but the soul of the poet which dwells within addresses its exalting communications in a language understood by every sensitive listener.

A Liszt setting of a Bach choral prelude from a church cantata led to the "Italian Concerto" of Bach, with its "Andante" strangely foretelling another age, and its sparkling finale.

The "Sonata, op. 31, No. 2 in D minor" of Beethoven exhibits a remarkable kinship to its two proximates of op. 29, which includes the "Moonlight." This work, with the same fantasy-like freedom of form, was discoursed by Rachmaninoff with rapt introspection, yet with a healthy frankness far removed from the sentimentalizing of the mere emotionalist. The opening allegro was contemplative, yet red-blooded, and the adagio the very apotheosis of poetic clairvoyance, yet never losing a masculine tenderness of strength.

### One Example of Chopin.

The one example of Chopin, the "Scherzo in C-sharp minor," was such another proclamation of healthy romanticism, marvelously gauged in dynamics. Students, and all and sundry pianists, may observe that the 'ripples' were amenable to honest, plain counting.

As composer, and as such he is one of the elect among living workers, the player offered four of his own preludes, those in A minor, G major and B-flat major, radiant examples of pianistic lyricism. Then came what nine-tenths of the audience openly hoped for but hardly expected to get—the famous and universally favored C-sharp minor prelude, which he does color considerably differently from the usual conception of it. He may deprecate the day he wrote it, but it is his passport among the laity, and it still is a good tune, if we could hear it with fresh ears.

With Liszt and Wagner the program closed. The "Sonnetto del Petrarca" in E major was an especially moving exemplar of that portion of Liszt which has been better understood by this generation than by the last, when the rhapsodies and the transcriptions of operatic airs were accepted as the true Liszt. Of the real Liszt, which springs from the wells of romantic inspiration, Rachmaninoff is the ideal interpreter.

"Spinning Song" Transcription. Liszt's transcription of the "Spinning Song" from Wagner's "Flying Dutchman" was an instance of superb pianism. Here for one time, luring the ominous intoning of the horn-call of the phantom Dutchman, the insistent rattling of the stage-door by the raging northerner, lent somewhat of lugubrious verisimilitude to the situation.

The Brass transcription of the final "Magic Fire" scene from Wagner's "Die Walkuere" was notable not so much for the fire as for the merged godlike authority and paternal tenderness of Wotan's farewell to Bruennhilde.

We have hardly mentioned the technical prowess of the player. It was never in the way, and for the most part was unnoticed, which is the most sincere of tributes. It was music which the audience heard.

In gracious acknowledgment of the enthusiasm of the audience three extra numbers were given. A sigh of enjoyment swept over the crowd

at the first notes of the Liszt "Lieb-  
estraum" in A-flat, which the young-  
sters in the audience should have  
attended well, since they are not  
going to hear it many more times  
at the hands of those who dwell on  
Olympus. The player's thoroughly  
engaging setting of Kreisler's "Lieb-  
esleid" and "The Flight of the Bum-  
blebee" (Rimsky-Korsakoff), a most  
agile bug, closed the evening.