

MASTER PIANIST IS WELL RECEIVED

Rachmaninoff, god to thousands and legend to as many, held an audience in the Playhouse enrapt with adoration last night as he appeared in a brilliant concert that included Mozart, Liszt, Chopin and several of his own compositions.

Tall, sparsely built, the moody composer was very cognizant of an audience in front of him until he started to play, and once he started, coughs nor rustling of programs seemed to curb his fire and zeal. Several times, he seated himself before the piano, fixed his waistcoat or cuffs, then played a run or two and with a mien of annoyance, glanced out over the audience as if giving a signal that now all must be silence.

From dreamy Mozart variations, he triumphantly went through the program, each number bringing at its close increasing applause. At the conclusion, the audience refused to budge. Rachmaninoff graciously responded with his famous "Prelude in G Sharp Minor" and even as the first bell-like notes of the composition were struck, the audience was unable to control its approval. The sharp sounds of applauding hands mixed with the opening bars.

It was not the usual heavy and pompous "Prelude" that was heard last night. Under the rendition of the master, the composition took on an aspect of genuine beauty, depicting the music bells of Moscow once gave forth, perhaps as on a cold Easter morning. Trite and accustomed as the famous prelude has become to every aspiring pianist's program, here under the touch of Rachmaninoff it became a revelation, with fuller emotions. All in all, it was a relief to one who has been subjected to so many ugly and ungainly renditions by puny imitators.

But the balcony and gallery of the Playhouse were not satisfied with even the Prelude. They wanted more and while the orchestra folks were putting on their wraps, those above faithfully clamored for more. Rachmaninoff came out again, acknowledged the enthusiasm with a smile and played two more encores.

The program opened with Mozart variations, followed by "Les Papillons" (Schumann), in which the composer gave the first intimation of the fire and fierceness that lay in his fingers and the flexibility of his wrists. Then came two charming gavottes, played in double quick time, as if specially for Dresden shepherds and their lasses.

The first half of the evening concluded with Chopin and played as Chopin has scarcely ever been played—a nocturne of sheer beauty; a rondo with an unbelievable lilt and scherzo that won for Rachmaninoff the evening.

The second portion of the program opened with two of his preludes, two Liszt compositions and finally a waltz like "Valse Caprice" (Strauss Tausig), with "One Lives But Once," as the theme.

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