

OVATION IS GIVEN TO RACHMANINOFF

Small but Appreciative Audience Thrilled by Artistry of Russian Pianist

Just as a great actor seizes upon the minds of his audience from his first step upon the stage, so did Rachmaninoff hold his small but appreciative audience at the Macon auditorium Thursday night by the compelling force of his tremendous personality and by the sway of his musical genius.

From the time he sat before the piano, his stalking physical frame was forgotten in the delight of the authoritative notes that rippled from his flying fingers. At no time since musical notes resounded within the walls of the auditorium, at least this commentator believes, has such playing been heard. There was immense power that sent out full notes seemingly to the ends of time and there was crisp staccato that cut silhouette patterns of sound which fairly danced before the astonished hearing of the listeners.

Perhaps one thing that enhanced appreciation of the program was the familiarity of the selections. There were pieces that almost everyone knew. They were being played as one had always hoped to hear them played, compellingly, and yet with a freshness that spoke of youth and with a completeness that spoke of eternity.

In the Beethoven variations with which the program opened, the pianist swept through the changes 'till the listener wished there were 50 more instead of the short 30-odd the composer had written. In the Chopin group, Valse in A flat, Nocturne in F sharp and Ballade in A flat, Rachmaninoff showed that he could play the delicate phases which this composer demands, and yet was not afraid to put an individual interpretation to his playing of the Ballade.

He closed the first part of the program with brilliant playing of Invitation to the Dance by Weber-Tausig. He opened the second part by playing his own C sharp minor Prelude, which is all too frequently attempted by those who do not follow the composer's interpretation. He gave a second of his own Preludes in contrast to the other and added his transcription of Mendelssohn's Scherzo and Midsummer Night's Dream.

Tumultuous applause followed his two Liszt selections, Etude in D flat and the Eighth Rhapsodie, that closed the announced program. He seemed particularly to enjoy playing this master of piano music and brought all the delicacy and all the power to the pieces which their composer demands. In response to applause Rachmaninoff returned for encores three times, to play Troika by Tschaiakowsky; his own composition, Humoresque, and The Smugler by Schumann.—D. G. M., JR.