

## AUDIENCE HAS BIG TREAT IN CONCERT HERE

Rachmaninoff Uses His Own  
Style to Thrill Throng  
At Shrine.

By C. B. MACKLIN

Sergei Rachmaninoff, great Russian pianist, played to a delighted audience at the Shrine auditorium Saturday night, and displayed long flights of sublime artistry, interspersed with some playing that was mediocre as compared with his other work.

Rachmaninoff's style is decidedly his own; to such an extent that he may be said to re-edit everything he plays. Probably no one ever took such tremendous liberties as he with, for example, the A flat Ballade of Chopin, and yet made an impressive and wholly artistic performance of it. His change of pace was bewildering, and his omission of rests—notably at the opening of the second theme, following the two C's—gave an entirely different mood to the passage. Yet there is no gainsaying the fact that it was beautiful music as he played it.

Made It a Fairy Revel

Altogether ravishing was his own transcription of the Mendelssohn Scherzo from *Midsummer Night's Dream*. The music itself is teeming with virtuosity, and the playing no less so. He made it, however, much more than that: made it a fairy revel as joyous and irresponsible as a waterfall; a marvel of beauty and delight.

I had been hoping Rachmaninoff would play the Beethoven variations in C minor, because I had tremendously admired the records he has made of this work. I could not feel that his playing of this compared with his records at all favorably. It was rough and clumsy in many places, and lacked altogether the compelling fire that was in him when he made the records.

Execution Is Skillful

The *Invitation to the Dance*, almost throughout, was an inimitable exhibition of grace of thought and skill of execution, rising in places to great heights; yet there were odd, straight, sharp-cornered phrases which seemed curiously at variance with the rest of the piece. This feature, indeed, is a definite element in his style: a part of a deliberate plan. It is no accident, for he does it consistently. There will be short passages in which he seems to hack the notes out of the piano as harshly as possible; and this will be instantly followed by a flight so poetic and beautiful as to make it hard to realize that the same man did both things.

But few numbers escaped this treatment: the Chopin Waltz, the Nocturn, and the Schubert Liszt *Serenade* being some which did. Both of the latter, especially the *Serenade*, were the very spirit of lovely, melancholy brooding throughout; and the hush that followed, before the applause stormed, was eloquent testimony to the grip held upon the audience.

Liszt Numbers Close Program

The two Liszt numbers which closed the program were delightful and exciting "zumpf" as Cyril Scott calls them, spectacular and sensational. Yet Rachmaninoff is no trickster. His sincerity is obvious and deep, and he played nothing merely as a demonstration of himself. Rather he played everything as a demonstration of his own firm musical beliefs; and he was consistently authoritative, if not consistently convincing.

He steadily resisted all demands for encores until the close of the program, when he responded with three; and undoubtedly would have played more, but he felt the demand was not unanimous—the usual small number of hat grabbers being on hand, and the minority ruling.