

RACHMANINOFF PRESENTED IN L. A. CONCERT

By RAYMOND E. MITCHELL

A "Fantaisie" program, not often featured by pianists, was heard at Pflitharmonie Auditorium last night, when Sergei Rachmaninoff, distinguished Russian pianist, appeared in the first of his two scheduled recitals. His list included Scriabine's "Sonate Fantaisie," Opus 10; Haydn's "Fantaisie," C-major; Schumann's "Phantasietuoke" (In the Night, Whims, Fable); "Fantaisie," Chopin; "Sonata Quasi una Fantasia," C-sharp minor, Beethoven; and Liszt's "Fantasia Quasi Sonata."

If any doubt is held by a person cultivated in a musical way, about Rachmaninoff's pianistic achievements, the fault lies somewhere, and it would be interesting to know just where it is. Great prominence should be in store for such a deserving detector—will he step forward, please? To this humble scribe, it all seemed like very finished and polished piano playing, but I must confess that when describing Rachmaninoff's art, one can get but superficial results at best with such things as mere words.

The pianist chose the Scriabine, Haydn, Schumann and Chopin works for the first half. His trills, scales, arpeggios, chords and a thousand and one other technical feats forced themselves upon the listener by reason of their consummate finish and beauty. Were Rachmaninoff to indulge in a group of improvisations it would be quite as interesting as when he combines the same dexterity for the elucidation of another's thoughts. All of it, every bar, every note, was piano playing, sincere, spiritual, superb. Perhaps to many the most impressive feature about the man is the character of his repertory, for he excludes from his programs the trite, cheap, modernistic trash which is being dumped all too freely on the concert platform by many artists of high caliber.

The second part of the program was given over to the Beethoven and Liszt sonatas. The writer was especially impressed with the artist's reading of the "Moonlight Sonata." Its movements were all of particular beauty. Rachmaninoff evidently put all his resources into the concluding Liszt work, and the great piece of music sounded its message as we have never before heard it. Among the numerous encores was included the distinguished pianist's own "C-sharp minor Prelude."

Rachmaninoff will be heard in a second recital Saturday at 2:30 p. m. in a program including works by Chopin and Beethoven, and a group of song transcriptions by Liszt, Tausig and Rachmaninoff.