

RACHMANINOFF PLAYS OWN C MINOR CONCERTO

Composer-Pianist Soloist With
St. Louis Symphony Or-
chestra at the Odeon.

By THOMAS B. SHERMAN.

A HUGE audience went into captures yesterday afternoon at the Odeon when Sergei Rachmaninoff, the celebrated composer-pianist, played his own piano concerto in C Minor with the St. Louis Symphony Orchestra. Why so many people with troubles of their own should be made happy by such sad, sad music can be completely explained only by a psychopathologist but the late George Moore furnished a clew when he said that the sorrows of life were the joys of art.

Mr. Rachmaninoff's sorrowful musings, in this instance, have been wrought into a symphonic "torch" song which can be counted on to rake the emotions fore and aft even when performed by an ordinary pianist. But when the solo artist happens to be the composer himself with his extraordinary hands, his extraordinary head and his dominating personality, the effect becomes hypnotic, and the more susceptible tend to go off into swoons of ecstasy. Such was obviously the state of affairs yesterday. The audience could hardly have been more concentrated in its attention or more nearly unified in its response.

The performance, both on the part of the soloist and the orchestra, was of virtuoso size and quality and met every demand made by the sentimental pessimism of the music. It was full-blown, rich in color and strikingly accented. Mr. Rachmaninoff's complete authority was derived, of course, both from his oneness with the music and from his mastery of the instrument. His instinct for tempo, his effective use of time accents and the control of dynamics which enabled him to mold his phrases so voluptuously, were all component parts of this mastery.

The orchestra under Vladimir Golschmann was en rapport with the soloist at all times. The accompaniment corroborated the soloist in all important particulars.

Though Mr. Rachmaninoff looked as if he wanted to beg off from encores, he finally yielded, playing his own "Troika" and Moussorgky's "Hopak."

The orchestra also scored in the first part of the program with a carefully prepared, vivid and plastic performance of Chausson's Symphony in E Flat. Though this symphony is a minor work it deserves an occasional performance. Chausson was a pupil of Cesar Franck and his symphony bears a certain internal resemblance to the Franck Symphony in D Minor. In the opinion of this reviewer, it is a better work because it seems to come from a healthier spirit. The audience apparently liked it very much.

The concert began with Brahms' "Tragic" overture.