

## MUSIC

Rachmaninoff Plays to Capacity Audience in Opening Concert of Fritschy Series in Convention Hall—Preludes and Preludes—Until at Last He Plays the Desired C Sharp Minor—Ricci the Second Artist in the Series.

**I**F Kansas City has a favorite pianist, it is Sergei Rachmaninoff. Other and younger artists have appeared to focus attention by their dazzling technique, speed and rhythm, but hardly another has such a multitude of devotees. They crowded about the stage last night following his recital in Convention hall, mutely pleading for more.

The program had been rather heavy and rather long, but he was kind to the hero-worshipping crowd, playing four brilliant encores and playing them with more warmth than most things in his printed list. As if purposely to tantalize the prelude-minded audience, his program listed two by Rachmaninoff, one of them—the second—familiar and a more subtle thing than the famed C Sharp Minor. He gave its inner voices passionate things to say.

#### Desired Prelude Third Encore.

Not until the end of the concert and after he had played Schumann's "Contravendista"—a barytone solo arranged for piano—and Tchaikowsky's tuneful and rhyming "Troika," did he concede the desired prelude. The listeners hung upon its every phrase, as indeed they had hung upon every phrase of every composition played by the master, but this time they applauded with an emphasis more marked. Once again he returned to the stage to play "The Bee" by Rimsky-Korsakoff and hundreds leaned over the edge of the stage at his feet.

Technically, Rachmaninoff is a much better pianist than he was long ago when he was the czar's director of music and first came to America. He has advanced in the last decade as well. But, while he is undoubtedly a better technician, that which he has gained in virtuosity he seems to have lost in native worth. There used to be a Rachmaninoff who expressed himself at the keyboard as frankly as in his compositions. While he has been developing a keyboard technique to compare with that of some of the younger men to whom technique is the end and aim of musical existence, something seems to have slipped away. The garment of gravity has been laid aside and the somber poet apparently has taken some pains to become as other men.

#### Transcription Well Done.

The *tour de force* of his program last night was his manner of dealing with Bach's Sonata (for violin alone) in E major. He has made a marvelous transcription of the piece and he played it with a feeling for form and for the ideas and style of the original composer that left it pure Bach as it unfolded under his fingers. The first movement, the prelude, is great piano music, which cannot be said for most transcriptions. The Gavotte, a Kreisler favorite, and the Gigue are wholly at home on the keyboard.

A Beethoven Sonata, Schubert's singing Rondo and Debussy's perfect Suite completed the first half of the program, the audience showing a fine appreciation of the Suite. A Chopin waltz and ballade, two preludes, the Weber music and the scherzo from "A Midsummer Night's Dream" completed the program.

The concert was the first in the Fritschy series of four and hardly a chair was vacant. Ruggiero Ricci, celebrated boy violinist, will play January 23. Lily Pons will sing February 1 and Tito Schipa, February 20.

M. K. P.