

Music

By Herman Wise

SERGEI RACHMANINOFF

A stone-faced pianistic giant lumbered to his Steinway at Masonic Temple Monday night. A roar of applause broke out. The gentleman took several bows, let himself down on his leather-cushioned bench and began to adjust himself. Hushed silence spread through the large auditorium. The pianist struck several preliminary chords. He was ready. So was the audience that numbered well over 5,000.

Rachmaninoff, whose C-sharp Minor Prelude made his name a household word years ago, began his concert. It was destined to be another personal triumph, an evening of virtuoso performances, an occasion for excitement and pleasure for a great throng.

Year after year the master musician returns in concert. It is unnecessary to sing his praises; they have been sung in these columns time and again. There is little left to say. One can only report that this appearance was equally as gratifying as those that have gone before. Perhaps more so, for it was closer and fresher.

There was much variety in this program, made up of eight numbers by as many composers, an extremely choice lot.

There were the Beethoven Sonata, Op. 31, No. 2, with its lovely Adagio and its sparkling Allegretto; the Bach Sonata in E major for unaccompanied violin, which the soloist himself has transcribed; the beautifully inspired Schubert Rondo in D major, a group of Chopin; Debussy's "Children's Corner," Two Preludes by Rachmaninoff, a Scherzo of Borodine and the Tausig arrangement of Weber's "Invitation to the Dance."

Of chief interest were the Beethoven, the Schubert, the Debussy, the Borodine, the Two Preludes and the Weber. Less interesting were the Bach and the Chopin.

Mr. Rachmaninoff's force and amazing dexterity fits itself perfectly to such works as the Rondo and the Scherzo. One of the high moments was the "Invitation to the Dance," familiar to followers of the Detroit Symphony Orchestra. Here, as well as in his own works, Rachmaninoff revealed his genius in its fullness; here he was supreme. Such thunderous applause as he received was undeniably merited.

Of course there were encores, but not as many as the audience would have liked. The first encore was the Spinning Song of Liszt. Then Rachmaninoff compromised with his listeners, played the C-sharp Minor Prelude for which they had all been waiting and called it a night.