

# GREAT Pianist's MASTERY

## RACHMANINOFF THRILLS, CONSOLES WITH RECITAL

By STANLEY A. BLIGH

Words are a fearfully inadequate mode of expression at times. In attempting to describe the deep sense of complete satisfaction derived from the playing of Sergei Rachmaninoff, the famous Russian composer-pianist, the inadequacy is accentuated.

To an enthusiastic and eager audience in the Vancouver theatre on Thursday night Rachmaninoff played as only Rachmaninoff is able.

This peerless master of the keyboard thrilled, soled and consoled with his fire, vitality, breadth, quiet dignity and graciousness.

With exquisite tone coloring, a technique which is subservient to his great mental capacity, and underlying all a deep spiritual understanding in the messages he conveyed, we were enthralled.

We did not feel like applauding. It seemed almost sacrilege to disturb the atmosphere he had created.

### A GLORIOUS EXPERIENCE

There was applause, thunderous rounds of it, but Rachmaninoff preserved his austere dignity until he again submerged himself in the music and transported us to worlds unknown. It was another glorious experience to store away in the chamber of our remembrances.

The pianist opened the program with the "Sonata in D major" (Mozart).

That he invested with the serenity and simplicity characteristic of the composer's writings, always flowing on with a graceful sensitiveness, with delicate tonal color, mounting to a finely controlled climax in the final movement.

### POWER AND PASSION

In Chopin's Opus 25, the "Sonata in B flat minor," the grave movement was treated with grandeur and beauty, while the pulsating, strong, curt characteristics of the Doppio movimento stirred to the very depths.

In the Scherzo, which is one of the most powerful of all the Chopin scherzos, Rachmaninoff portrayed the power and passion, the hints of tragedy and the whistling of the wind in a realistic manner, whilst the echoing melodic phrasing was delightfully fascinating.

The Marche Funebre, with its bell-like basses, its solemn grandeur, in the opening measures struck a responsive chord.

The triumph over death, the poignancy, lucidness and singing quality of tone in the middle movement, the melody of which was played in lovely rubato manner with the accompaniment always retaining its rhythm, held us in wonderment and directed our gaze into the beatific regions of a beyond.

The Finale, a short presto movement, was wonderful in its sombreness and real Asiatic colorings.

### COLOR AND STYLE

In a group of compositions comprising "Poem Study" (Scriabine), "Fairy Tale" (Medtner), "Scherzo" (Borodin), "Barcarolle" (Rubinstein), "Two Preludes" (Rachmaninoff), and "One Lives But Once" (Strauss-Tausig), the great pianist displayed almost every color and style of playing in a manner which is only possible to a great artist.

Rachmaninoff was awarded a great ovation at the conclusion of the recital, and in response to insistent demand he played several additional numbers, including, to the delight of a great number of the audience, his own popular "C Sharp Minor Prelude."

Rachmaninoff was presented by the International Celebrity Concerts under management of Lily J. Laverock.