

Sybella Clayton Bassett Entertains Rachmaninoff

Sybella Clayton Bassett, Salt Lake pianist, was hostess to Sergei Rachmaninoff, the eminent Russian virtuoso, during the artist's brief stay in Salt Lake last week, giving a dinner for him at the Alta club and taking him over the city and its environs. The world-famed pianist was deeply impressed with the beauty of Salt Lake in winter declaring that he had heretofore had no idea the place was so large or that he would find any considerable amount of snow. He praised the capitol building, the buildings at the University of Utah, and enthused over the grandeur of the mountains to the east and north of the city.

Tuesday last, the day of his Salt Lake recital, Mr. Rachmaninoff and Mrs. Bassett attended the regular organ recital at the tabernacle, where the program was played by Organist Edward P. Kimball. The Russian master showed a profound interest in the organ, which he declared to be one of the greatest he had ever heard, either in Europe or America. At the conclusion of the program, while Mr. Kimball was explaining the mechanism and the various stops to the visiting artist, he asked that "the American folk-song" be repeated. He did not know the title of the composition, but declared that it was wonderfully beautiful. The selection Rachmaninoff referred to was the "Old Melody" of the recital, arranged by the organist, and in this instance was "Old Black Joe." The artist also made special mention of "O My Father." He made a minute examination of the organ but refused to play it, even as he declared that the effectiveness of the recital tempted him to give up the piano and take organ work.

Mrs. Bassett played one number at her home for Rachmaninoff (the C Sharp Minor Prelude), winning from the pianist the comment that she did it well, although her importunities for a suggestive lesson were in vain. Mrs. Bassett went east some weeks ago, as accompanist for Lucy Gates at the time she dedicated a new opera house at Colorado Springs, where her work was warmly praised, and then she went on an extended tour with Alice Gentle, soprano of the Metropolitan Opera company, giving concerts at Denver, Pueblo, Beaumont, Texas, Kansas City, Salina, Kan., then returning to Kansas City, where Mrs. Bassett gave her own program.

Miss Gentle, who has gone to the Pacific coast to fill a short engagement with the San Carlos Opera company, has recently signed up for a season with the Opera Comique, and will go to Europe in a few weeks. Mrs. Bassett said yesterday that the tour of Miss Gentle and herself was a pronounced success in every way, the audiences being large and appreciative, with highly commendatory notices from the critics in every city in which they appeared.