

Rachmaninoff, Russian Pianist Plays At Lyric

Great Heights Of Melody
And Interpretation Are
Reached In Concert Of
Slavic Artist.

An audience spreading well back into standing space of the Lyric last night gave enthusiastic welcome to Sergei Rachmaninoff, who responded heartily with a program fully justifying the original outburst and bringing quite the warmest applause that the Lyric's walls have echoed this year.

The Russian's appeal to his audiences compares most closely to that of Kreisler. Both these musical prodigies start with much the same musical comprehension, training and apparently limitless technical equipment, and on that sound foundation construct a virtuosity without present-day parallel in their respective fields. Both stray far from the conservatory method of interpretation. Both excel in melodic scores. And both are wise enough to know that the average audience wants just that sort of program.

Chopin Group Pleases.

For these reasons there was no marked excitement over the unfamiliar and somewhat incoherent Medtner Improvisation which opened the evening, or even over the Beethoven Sonata Appassionata which succeeded it. But whatever restlessness there had been during those numbers vanished with the first measure of the Chopin group, which started with a Nocturne, sped into a Valse, and then rolled into the gorgeous Sonata which contains the Funeral March.

The tempestuous finale, which concludes that Sonata, brought applause so vigorous that it could be stemmed only by a double encore from Chopin—the gay little D-flat waltz and the variations on the familiar "Maiden's Wish." Yet this reception was to be exceeded a few minutes later when the brilliant Paganini-Liszt "Campánella" was performed with the most astonishing display of pyrotechniques that has been witnessed by even the oldest inhabitant.

Renders Own Compositions.

More from the artist's own compositions could easily have been given. There was a double number, the Melody, whose alternating of left and right hand in the upper reaches of the keyboard is the despair of students, and the melodious guitar-like Serenade. And as a final encore came the inevitable Prelude, which, there is a suspicion, Rachmaninoff by this time bitterly regrets having written. It is doubtful if any audience permits him to escape without at least one performance of it.

The proximity of this recital and that of Paderewski—which comes next Monday—is of especial interest. Rachmaninoff is the only artist who has seriously threatened the close grip which the Polish master has long held on the American public. There will be profit in comparing the relative positions they occupy today with the Baltimore public.

M. S. W.