

## RACHMANINOFF IS HEARD BY LARGE AND APPRECIATIVE AUDIENCE OF MUSIC LOVERS

By WILLIAM WALKER TODD

The appearance last night at the Shreveport Fair Grounds Coliseum of Rachmaninoff, composer, conductor and super-pianist, may truly be termed an epochal event in the music circles of Shreveport, and as befitted the occasion, called forth a great outpouring of the music lovers, not only of Shreveport, but also of many towns in the surrounding section of country, including many places from well into Texas and Arkansas.

Shreveport, justifying her rapidly growing musical life, has, during the past, welcomed within her gates many world-famous artists, but none who has created a more profound impression than did the distinguished Russian pianist and composer in his concert of last evening.

### Genius of Rachmaninoff.

As a creative and interpretative artist Rachmaninoff is one of the most interesting and compelling personalities of the present day music world. He is often termed the greatest follower of Tchaikowski, possibly a dubious compliment, however, as Rachmaninoff's prodigious and unique originality as a composer is sufficient unto itself and needs not the coupling with any other name, however great, to justify his own peculiar genre. Both, however, being Russian, intensely national in their musical instincts and aims, having covered practically the same widely inclusive fields of artistic activities, it is but natural that they should be instinctively associated in the popular mind.

As the greatest exponent, since Tchaikowski, of the Russian school of music, as exemplified in his own compositions, Rachmaninoff commands the profound interest of the musical world. While he may be termed a true modernist in the productions of his brain, it is modernism of a sane, logically progressive type, avoiding the neurotic, murky obscurity on the one hand, or the formless, hysterical cacophony on the other, of that class of present-day writers who fondly call themselves "ultra-modernists."

In listening to his works, regardless of the medium in which he expresses himself, whether in symphonic form, string quartet, vocal or piano productions, one is impressed with the conviction that they represent music of the most absolute type, one hundred per cent. pure gold, and that will withstand the only true and unbiased test of any art—the crucible of the years.

In regarding Rachmaninoff the composer, one must not, however, lose sight of his transcendental gifts as a pianist. Of the many great piano virtuosi there are a select few whose stupendous keyboard personalities entitle them to a peculiarly exalted niche in the halls of pianistic fame, and it can be truthfully said that Rachmaninoff is one of these.

### Replete with Interest.

While his program of last night, with the exception of the all-too-small group of his own compositions, was a rather conventional one, it was nevertheless replete with breathless interest from the first note to the last, under the alchemy of his wizard-like

technic and almost uncanny powers of interpretation.

The first number, the Chopin "Fantasy," in which the composer lavished, with a prodigal hand, some of his most inspired bits of lyric tenderness and passionate romanticism was a marvelous bit of tone-painting, reflecting the atmosphere of mystic imagery found so often incorporated in his more pretentious works.

The Schumann "Carneval," a series of musical pictures representing the carefree merriment of a masquerade ball, was given with a fascinating whimsicality that was irresistible.

Such cunningly wrought nuances, such pearly runs at lightning speed, such building up of climaxes and piling of effect upon effect are the heritage of only the elect of the keyboard and are not often heard in such perfection even in this day of pianistic giants.

### His Own Compositions.

Great interest naturally centered in the group of Rachmaninoff's own compositions and they were greeted with unstinted enthusiasm, particularly the world-famous "Prelude" with its realistic suggestions of the continual booming of heavy church bells, offset by chant-like harmonies



The fla

of haunting minors reflecting the grim atmosphere of snow-clad Russian steppes.

His "Serenade," too, was a highly characteristic bit of music entirely in his best style.

The Liszt arrangement of the Paganini "Campanella" gave him an opportunity to display his wonderful powers in the purely bravura style. At the close of the final number the audience remained seated, clamoring for more till Rachmaninoff generously accorded an additional number, this time one of his own arrangements of a Chopin number.

Mrs. F. O. Allen, under whose local management the famous artist appeared, and who always has the best musical interests of Shreveport at heart, is to be felicitated upon the notable artistic, as well as financial success of the occasion, and should be accorded the grateful thanks of the music lovers of this section for affording them the opportunity of such a rare treat.