

## The Cosmocolumn

### A Master At The Keyboard

A TALL, GAUNT figure with the face of a sphinx wandered onto the Auditorium stage last night as the University chimes struck the hour of eight. The figure slouched to the piano bench, unconcernedly improvised for a minute or two and then commenced a program, the memory of which will long be cherished by the many who were present.

The opening Mendelssohn "Variations Serieuse" were played, as their title suggests, in a serious mood with unique, crisp phrasing.

\* \* \* \* \*

The outstanding number of the program was the massive Liszt "Sonata in B Minor." With his exquisite modulations and gradations of tones and his supplementary use of dynamics to enhance the climaxes, Rachmaninoff played the sonata, and depicted as Liszt wrote, the struggle of one filled with the noblest aspirations and battling against relentless destiny.

After reappearing several times, Rachmaninoff played with an extremely delicate bass accompaniment as an encore a selection by Gluck.

\* \* \* \* \*

It has been said that the Russian artist reveals in his playing more faithfully the mind and soul of Chopin than any other living pianist. Last night his playing seemed a mirror of his chosen music—surely the virtuoso's principal forte lies in his interpretive powers.

The "Prelude" revealed a prolific composer, and such exquisite shading is seldom heard. Two outbursts of applause came from the audience before he was allowed to continue with his delightfully refreshing "Serenade."

The last programmed number, the Godowsky arrangement of "Kunstlerleben" by Johann Strauss, Hungary's nineteenth century "waltz king," has a pleasing melody though not as well known as his "Beautiful Blue Danube." Rachmaninoff presented a true melodic picture of "Artist Life" which gave Strauss the theme for his composition. Following were two of the Chopin waltzes, and the program was concluded by Dohnany's "Etude Caprice in F Minor." In these last encores Rachmaninoff proved without a doubt that he is one of the most finished technicians of his generation.

The art of Rachmaninoff is self-restrained, almost introspective, rather than impulsively eloquent. He is the least emotional of any of the great pianists before the American public. His playing was devoted intently to the interpretation of his music, and not even in the most brilliant of the pieces played was brilliancy of technique ever made to be something existent for itself.

Though last night was a repetition of many nights for Rachmaninoff, to those who listened it was the lifting for a short time of the curtain upon the complex nature of a great musician.

TENTH MUSE