

## Rachmaninoff, Pianist-Composer, Shows His Mastery In Concert Here

Sergei Rachmaninoff, famous Russian pianist-composer, simply walks out upon the stage and plays the piano. He is absolutely unaffected and has none of the mannerisms one expects from such an artist.

Yet what a wealth of meaning he puts into that one little word, plays. Ask anyone who attended his concert at the high school auditorium last night when he appeared in Fresno for the first time, under the auspices of the Fresno Musical club.

Three of his dozen numbers were worth the entire price of admission. They were Chopin's "Ballade," which he played with masterly ease; his own famous "Prelude," a thing of grandeur with an exquisite ending, and Liszt's "Polonaise," a number particularly adapted to Rachmaninoff's personal style and one more familiar to the audience save, perhaps, his own composition.

For the rest Rachmaninoff played from such masters as Schumann, Chopin and Liszt, using as his opening number one of his personal favorites, a Gluck-Saint-Saens arrangement, and for his two closing encores, which were, incidentally, his only two encores, "Troika," a weird combination of his and Chrysler's.

True, encores were all too scarce last night, but it was not through lack of appreciation on the part of the audience, which liked the famous Russian from the start and applauded insistently.

Rachmaninoff is a distinct type. Long arms, long legs, stooped and with close cropped head. He is 52.

He doesn't look the musician type. Yet at the piano he has absolute surety, a powerful touch. At first one thinks he is too powerful, especially his left hand, yet when he glides into runs of bell like clarity he is smooth as oil.

Strange to say he likes jazz—that is jazz of a sort. "As Paul Whiteman plays it, it's all right; as others play it not so good," he says.

Possibly his jazz likes and dislikes were formed at the University of Nebraska, where he was director of music for a time. Certainly they were not formed at the St. Petersburg or Moscow conservatories, where he was educated. His playing has decidedly Russian tendencies, yet his stage presence has a straightforward American turn.—  
F. T. H.

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