

Rachmaninoff Shows Mastery of the Piano

BY ROBERT ESTCOURT.

Under the auspices of the Des Moines music council, Sergei Rachmaninoff, celebrated Russian musician, appearing in a piano recital as the fourth attraction of the all-star concert series, drew a capacity house last night at the Women's Club auditorium.

Not only is Rachmaninoff a great pianist but his expressions in the creative field stamp him as one of the foremost figures in the musical world today.

His program: "Variations in C Minor," and "Sonata Appassionata" of Beethoven; a Chopin group made up of a Scherzo, Etude and Ballade; the pianist's own "Etude Tableau," and his famous "C sharp minor prelude" and concluding with the Strauss-Godowsky "Artist Life" waltzes was given to an audience that reacted in a praiseworthy manner to the colossal playing of this supreme artist. His Chopin was rather individual, but to a public suffering from an everlasting stream of bad Beethoven playing, the sonata and the variations came as a consoling heavenly breeze. The mighty genius of Beethoven for once was revealed, and philosophy—through the medium of music—held full sway. The only regret one could express consists in having had the tremendous impression marred by the deafening slapping together of hands indulged in by the audience immediately following the termination of the performance.

Though of an entirely different character the "Artist Life" waltzes perhaps gave more pleasure to most of the listeners. The melodies here are bewitchingly beautiful, and through the ingenuity of Leopold Godowsky (who in the opinion of many critics is the first man since Chopin to write well for the piano), they received a setting which abounds in marvelous effects with seemingly no end to contrivances of almost insurmountable difficulty. To overcome only the mechanical obstacles is a man's sized job, but to deliver this novelty in the way we heard it is to stand self-confessed; an unquestioned master of the pianoforte and of interpretation.