

RACHMANINOFF PROVES COLORFUL AS INTERPRETER

Picturesque Artistry Charms Audience in Program at the Odeon.

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In his recital at the Odeon last night, Sergei Rachmaninoff, the most impressive figure in the world of music today, was not so much a great pianist who is also a composer, as a great composer who happens to use the piano as a medium for conveying his musical ideas.

More and more, as he probed each succeeding composition for its final ounce of meaning, and held it up to the consciousness of his audience, one became convinced that the mighty Russian was not primarily a virtuoso, but an interpreter.

It was a series of tone pictures that charmed the Rachmaninoff devotees last night. Pictures they were, mostly—a brooklet dancing in the sunlight, a troika ride across the steppes, the advance and retreat of a little Turkish army—all as vividly portrayed as if the artist had used a paletteful of colors instead of ivory keys and his own fingers of steel and velvet.

But there were some canvases of heroic size, too. There were the D Major Partita of Bach and the B Minor Sonata of Chopin, to lend sufficient weight and dignity to a program extraordinarily free from the hackneyed and commonplace.

Two of Rachmaninoff's own transcriptions, one of Schubert's "Das Baechlein" and an adaptation of Fritz Kreisler's "Liebesfreud" were breath-taking in their loveliness. Of his original works there was an "Etude Tableau" and a "Prelude," not the too-popular one in C sharp minor, but a product of the composer's maturer genius.

Not a single Chopin waltz, polonaise or etude; no Shumann; but instead, a Schubert "Impromptu," three Liszt compositions which rarely find their way to a program, the "Consolation" in E Major, the "Dance of the Gnomes" and the typically bombastic "Heroica."

Too many empty chairs in the parquet seemed to have a depressing effect upon Rachmaninoff, and the result was noticeable both in his mood and in the reaction of the audience. Only three extra numbers were demanded at the close.