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RACHMANINOFF PLEASES WITH COMPOSITIONS

He's Composer Who Plays Piano, Reviewer Opines After Concert.

By GRACE HUTCHINGS.

Whether Sergei Rachmaninoff is a great pianist or a great composer who plays the piano, is a much mooted question today. In the mind of the humble reviewer, after hearing his recital at the Murat theater Sunday afternoon, he is a composer who plays the piano. It has been said that one book may make a author and one play a playwright, and now we know that one musical composition can make a successful concert pianist. Years ago Mr. Rachmaninoff composed a "Prelude" in C sharp minor and that one number made him famous. He has many compositions to his credit, but the public will never let that "Prelude" die. That he knows this and is anxious to please his public was deon-
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hackneyed number a place on his program.

Mr. Rachmaninoff is, of course, a fine pianist, but he is best when he plays his own compositions. His reading of other composers is different from any one else. He plays in an analytical manner. He seems fond of abrupt accents and pauses and of sharp contrasts. Also he affects a very staccato bass against a very legato right hand, which may be novel, but often spoils the musical thought and intention of the composer. He seemed anxious to imprint his own individuality on all that he played until he came to his own compositions, then he became a musician. All of his spectacular striving after effects seemed to drop from him. He played warmly, poetically, submerging himself into the music. He had programmed, besides the "Prelude," a "Walse," a gay little composition, and he added as encores another "Walse" and a "Barcarolle," both of which were masterfully played.

Next to his own compositions, his best playing was done in the Chopin "Waltzes," Mozart "Variations" and two Mendelssohn numbers, "Rondo Capriccioso" and the "Spinning Song," the latter added to the first group for an encore. Two other Chopin numbers "Scherzo," in B flat minor, and "Ballade," F minor, and the "Faust Waltz" (Gounod-Liszt) completed the program.

Whether or not we agree with Mr. Rachmaninoff in his peculiar and unique interpretations and the audience, made up largely of musicians, seemed to be greatly disagreeing as they left the theater, we will at least have to admit his is a flawless technique and a marvelous personality. He presents a brilliant and interesting program. There was not a dull moment from beginning to end.

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