

Rachmaninoff's Concert Draws Overflow House

BY EDWARD BARRY.

Because Sergei Rachmaninoff was playing the piano at the Auditorium yesterday in the Northwestern university series, enough people came downtown thru the snow to fill every seat in the house and to overflow into the orchestra pit. They stayed around after the recital to clap and to cheer and to force Mr. Rachmaninoff to play his C-sharp minor prelude.

He played it, too. He seemed to grumble a little, but the ghost of a smile that lit his face indicated that he was accepting his fate philosophically. Dynasties may fall (and have fallen), but the little piece which Mr. Rachmaninoff unthinkingly tossed off half a century ago will follow him like a shadow thru life.

Before the prelude signaled the end of the afternoon (it is like "Home, Sweet Home" in this respect) he had added a Chopin mazurka, "Die Walküre's" magic fire music, and the most familiar of the Liszt "Liebesträume" to a printed program made up of Bach, Beethoven, Schubert, Chopin, Liszt, and Rachmaninoff.

The two great glories of Mr. Rachmaninoff's playing—his superb command of tone and his wonderfully expressive rubato—were movingly in evidence thru much of the recital.

Some of the best displays of the piano's tone came in the last Beethoven sonata (where the theme of the slow movement had a solemn, dark gold quality admirably suited to the music's character), in the second subject of the Schubert A-flat impromptu (where the brave Rachmaninoff ring was softened to fit the intense lyricism of the piece), and in the Liszt D-flat étude (in which full colors and half lights combined to give a modern audience a good idea of the splendor and complexity of sound which was Liszt's peculiar genius as a pianist and as a composer for the piano).

The Rachmaninoff rubato—which is nothing artificial but merely a by-product of his determination to sing his melodies in an unhurried, perfectly natural way—gave the worn out "Liebestraum" a fresh, exciting new life and made the Chopin mazurka seem as wayward and folklike and outdoorsy as ever the composer could have desired.