

Piano Star Triumphs In Concert

By RICHARD D. SAUNDERS

The appearance of Serge Rachmaninoff attracted a capacity attendance of music lovers to the Philharmonic Auditorium for the noted pianist's Behymer-matine concert yesterday. The program was conventional in content, but superlatively well played, and the auditors simply declined to leave until vehement applause had been rewarded with six final encores.

Rachmaninoff's tremendous command and impeccable keyboard control are all the more enjoyable because there is no showing off nor visible effort, so that auditors may remain relaxed and savor the music itself to its fullest extent. On this occasion, his playing held a more mellow quality than has been noticeable before.

First came the Mozart A-major Variations, delicately limned with a suggestion of porcelain fragility. A Bach-Liszt organ Prelude and Fugue in a-minor was meditative to an almost improvisational extent in the Prelude, with the fugal voices, cleanly defined. Mendelssohn's "Rondo Capriccioso" always brings to mind visions of child prodigies, even when its mid-Victorian sentimentality is deftly hidden under fine playing.

The Beethoven Sonata, Op. 57 ("Appassionata") was beautifully rendered, imbued with strength that was a vital urge in the first movement, merged to a warm-voiced choral in the Andante, and resurged with vigor in the Finale.

A Chopin group consisted of the D-flat Nocturne, its haunting melody enunciated with purity of line, and two well-contrasted Mazurkas, elegantly poised in utterance.

Three of Rachmaninoff's own compositions were a new revision of his whimsical "Humoresque," a G-major Prelude, with a lovely melody over gently rocking accompaniment, and a showy "Etude-Tableau" in E-flat. In conclusion was the romantic outpouring of two Liszt items, the dreamy A-flat "Sonetto del Petrarca" and the ecstatic eleventh "Hungarian Rhapsody."

Encores began with Chopin and culminated in "the" Rachmaninoff Prelude in c-sharp-minor, of which the public seemingly never tires.