

RACHMANINOFF DIES IN CALIFORNIA AT 69

Famous Russian
Pianist Became
Ill on Eastern Tour

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at the same time, will be celebrated at the Los Angeles Russian Orthodox Church. Friends of the family announced that the funeral mass will be held Tuesday in the same church.

HAD TWO DAUGHTERS

Besides his wife, he is survived by two daughters, Mrs. Irena Wolkonsky, who had been living with the Rachmaninoffs since they bought a home here about a year ago, and Mrs. Tatiana Conus, who is in France.

Compositions by the musician included the operas "Aleko" and "Francesca Da Rimini," a popular symphonic poem, "The Island of the Dead," "Prelude in C Sharp Minor," piano concertos and quantities of songs, chamber music and miscellaneous works.

His interest in music started early. At the age of 13 a piano arrangement he made attracted the famed Russian composer, Tchaikovsky, who became interested in the young man and aided him in his career.

In his youth he conducted the Moscow Private Opera and the Imperial theatre. He made many appearances as guest conductor in other countries.

HAD ROMANTIC FLAIR

Rachmaninoff's piano technique was extraordinarily accurate, combined with a romantic flair and a tone that was peculiarly his own.

He first came to America in 1909, playing with the Boston Symphony Orchestra.

The same year he conducted the Philadelphia Orchestra in his Symphony No. 2 in E minor.

FREQUENTLY IN PHILA.

Rachmaninoff appeared frequently in Philadelphia, both as a recitalist and as soloist and conductor of the Philadelphia Orchestra. His last appearance here was at the Academy of Music, October 22, 1942, when he was soloist with the Philadelphia Orchestra.

The reputation of Rachmaninoff, one of the last survivors of the important group of Russian Romantics who centered about Tchaikovsky, was founded on his ability as pianist, conductor and composer.

For the wide public, his reputation was the result of a little prelude in C sharp minor, composed as a youth of 20 and destined to plague him through life. His audiences rarely let him go without playing it; usually it was the last encore at his recitals.

DIVERSIFIED COMPOSITIONS

But his compositions, many in the larger forms, included four piano concertos, a well-known rhapsody for piano and orchestra on a theme of Paganini's, the operas "Aleko" and "Francesca da Rimini," the very popular symphonic poem, "The Island of the Dead," three symphonies, and great quantities of piano pieces, songs, chamber music and miscellaneous work, some of high merit.

Rachmaninoff's early success in America as a pianist was, according to the late and very great pianist, Leopold Godowsky, a little embarrassing to him. For the Russian had been devoting himself largely to composition, and in public played chiefly his own music.

So when it became evident that Rachmaninoff was to have a career in America as a virtuoso, he turned to his friend Godowsky and braced up with his help much of the music he later played for American audiences.

As a pianist Rachmaninoff was, perhaps, only second to Paderewski in his prime, in the public mind. Not an extrovert type, the tall, slender Russian with close-cropped gray hair and the pronounced stoop, gave the impression on the stage of remoteness, sometimes even disdain. He smiled seldom; when, on a free day, he strolled down the aisles at Carnegie Hall in New York, he often called the heart of whichever colleague happened to be performing.

BORN APRIL 2, 1873

Rachmaninoff was born April 2, 1873, on an estate in the government of Novgorod, Russia. His first piano teacher was his mother; later he worked at the Petrograd Conservatory, and still later with his cousin Alexander Siloti in Moscow, to which city the family had moved. His chief composition teachers were Taneyev and Arensky, and he had much encouragement from Tchaikovsky. He was married in 1902.

In 1917, he took up permanent residence in America.