

# Rachmaninoff Reveals New Chopin to Akron Audience

By JOSEPHINE VAN DE GRIFT

The Sesame upon which every concert pianist banks his faith in appealing to the heart of the public (the steady chink chink of the box office receipts being purely an obligate matter) is the magic name of Chopin.

If he be a young pianist making his debut, the chances safely are that his program will be two-thirds Chopin, and all the critics will sharpen their pencils and hunt up a fresh store of adjectives. And the audience, not yet knowing what the critics think, will remark that they heard De Pachmann play that identical waltz in Carnegie hall 10 years ago.

If he be an established pianist he will at least once a year announce an entire Chopin program, at which time the critics will remark that the artist is greatly matured in his work; the music teachers will insist on sitting exactly where they can see whether he puts his thumb or his index finger on A flat; and all the sweet young conservatory students will bring their music and spend the evening mocking neat crescendoes in the wrong places.

Ten years or so of this has caused many of us to groan at the name of Chopin and to hide our Peters editions in the bottom of our trunks.

All of which is intended as prelude to the fact that a new Chopin was revealed to our delighted senses in the playing of Serge Rachmaninoff

at the armory Sunday afternoon. It came as a slap of salt sea spray in the face just as we were about to be drowned in Cologne water.

The program in itself was unique, consisting of five representative groups of etudes. On such a program neither Chopin nor Liszt could with propriety have been left out. Included with these were five short etudes of Rachmaninoff himself, a Russian group, and two of the Schumann-Paganini etudes. From which it will be seen that the artist did not commit the fatal mistake of playing down to one intelligence. Rather did the audience play up to his. The program was somewhat lengthy and yet at the close the audience refused to stir until it had been satisfied with yet another encore.

Rachmaninoff's playing is in all things powerful and masculine. Even his tenderness is masculine tenderness. Never merely pretty, it is some times beautiful, frequently terrible, always relentless. He is one to respect first and love afterwards.

Quite by accident I passed him after the concert. He was seated on a little wooden chair behind a door in the armory, all alone, hiding from those who would have sought him out. It was only a passing greeting but I gleaned in that instant that his powerful hands were warm and vibrant and that his face was beautiful.