

PIANO GENIUS THRILLS CROWD

Rachmaninoff Applauded In Civic Concert Opener

All of the charm, the gorgeous beauty of which the modern piano-forte is capable Sergei Rachmaninoff drew from the grand instrument on the stage of the Miami Edison High school Monday night and scattered in cascading showers of musical tones and rhythm over an audience of around 2,000 persons.

The concert marked the opening of the Civic Music Association's season of four presentations planned for the forthcoming winter, and as such it was an occasion paralleled only by the recent opening of the University of Miami's symphony orchestra season. The record audience crowded the auditorium to the last seat, and the world of society was as well represented as that of music among those present. Mme. Rachmaninoff herself was one of the evening's auditors.

The program, an infinitely varied one, was such as to exhaust the last possibilities of the piano. Executed with flawless precision, the succession of glittering numbers brought wave after wave of applause from the audience. But it was not until the great composer, pianist and conductor played as an encore his own Prelude in C Sharp Minor that the enthusiasm of those present overran in a spontaneous outburst as the first fateful chords were sounded.

Played As Never Before

Rachmaninoff played this number as probably no Miami audience has ever heard it played, possibly as no Miami audience will ever hear it played again. He played it with the slow deliberation of the weary old veteran of a thousand musical battles—he had his American debut 30 years ago after an extensive musical experience before coming to this country. He read things into the Prelude that, it seemed, had never been there before. It was the slow footsteps of fate treading a pathway across the stage. Yet there was in it something of suffering, of tolerance, of kindness; ultimately of grim persistence and determination. There was in it all of the greatness of musical thought and melody that Rachmaninoff, the composer, must have envisioned when he first wrote the piece. There were all those things in the C Sharp Minor Prelude as the composer played it himself Monday night . . . and then something more.

The program opened with the Rameau "Variations," and continued with the three movements of the Bach "Italian Concerto." Four sections of Debussy's "Suite Bergamasque" concluded the first half of the program. During this time, Rachmaninoff played all sections without leaving the stage, although he arose to acknowledge the applause; and as a result, the late arrivals were not admitted until the intermission period.

The second half of the program opened with the composers own "Etude-Tableau," continuing with four Etudes of Chopin, Three Liszt compositions, Etude in D Flat Major, "Voices of the Woods," and "Dance of the Gnomes" brought the formal part of the program to a close. After this, Rachmaninoff, in evident friendly reaction to the large and enthusiastic audience, returned to play five encores.

—HENRY CAVENDISH.

SERG'S GRANDDAUGHTER HAS OPERATIC DEBUT

NEW YORK, Dec. 19. (AP)—The granddaughter of Sergei Rachmaninoff, the grimly brilliant Russian pianist, made her debut as a singer this afternoon at the Breaury school.

She is 13-year-old Sophie Wolkonsky, whose mother is the Princess Irina Wolkonsky, daughter of the pianist. Sophie sang the role of Gretel in Humperdinck's "Hansel and Gretel."

After the performance she received flowers and a telegram from Grandfather Sergei, who is in Miami.