

# RACHMANINOFF IN FORUM PROGRAM

## Proves Himself Master Technician in First of Wednesday Club Series

Harrisburg had one of those rare opportunities to hear a combination which is the delight of every musician's heart, a composer who is also a master technician on the instrument for which he writes.

Sergei Rachmaninoff, Russian pianist, returning to the concert stage here after far too long an interval, captivated an audience which filled the Forum of the State Educational Building, where he was presented by the Wednesday Club Civic Music Association.

It is reasonable to expect that a composer who so skillfully transcribes his own musical dreams into realities of printed notes and musical staves should also be able to interpret notes transcribed by other composers into living, sincere harmonies and melodies.

### Melodies Ripple from Keys

Rachmaninoff does just that. His music last night was living Bach, Chopin and Liszt. So skillful is he on keyboard and pedal that he seemed never to give a thought to anything but the musical idea which he sought to convey.

Thus, when the piece at hand demanded it, he produced tones as mellow as moonlight, or notes as individual and as pronounced as a bugle. Melodies rippled from the piano strings like liquid poured from a pewter pitcher, smooth, pianistic, with none of the showman's legato.

His delicacy of touch and shading was fairly startling, when one considered the tall, long-armed genius who looked as if he might have been able to shove the piano off the stage into the wings as easily as he coaxed his tunes out of its strings.

### Chopin Sonata a Highlight

Probably the highlight of his program last night was the Chopin Sonata, opus 58, a veritable symphony for the piano. Melodic and brilliant its four movements run the scale of harmonic variety and interest. His performance of the final movement was something long to be remembered by concert-goers here.

In Bach's French Suite in E major, which opened the program, Rachmaninoff made the melodies dance with lively charm and movement. His third number included The Trout, a song by Schubert embellished by Liszt, and Schubert's Impromptu in A flat minor, in which solo parts were skillfully brought by the master technician out from a dazzling maze of background chords.

Following intermission, Rachmaninoff played three of his own compositions. The first, an Etude-Tableau, told a tragic story; the second was a light, airy piece he calls Daisies; the third, Oriental Sketches, was a rapid, tuneful number which brought sincere applause both for composer and pianist.

Two other moderns were represented in Nicholas Medtner's Fairy Tale in E minor, and Novelette and Toccata, two pieces by the young Frenchman, Francis Poulenc.

Liszt's Tarantella from "Venezia e Napoli," difficult and captivating, closed his program in a blaze of glory.

His appreciative audience punctuated his program throughout with applause, which subsided only after he responded at the completion of the scheduled numbers with his own popular Prelude in C sharp minor. News dispatches in recent weeks have intimated that Rachmaninoff is considering retirement from the concert stage. Happily this report has been denied by the master himself. At any rate, last night's audience will be living in hope that he will return again to Harrisburg, and soon.