

CAPACITY CROWD ENJOYS RECITAL

Sergei Rachmaninoff, Pianist, Thrills Audience in Municipal Auditorium

Sergei Rachmaninoff played a recital last night in the Raleigh Memorial Auditorium to a capacity audience that completely filled the hall and overflowed onto the stage. This concert was the first of the series of six to be presented this Winter by the local Civic Music Association.

Rachmaninoff has long been a household name, known and revered the world over as a composer, but it is only in recent years that his fame has spread abroad as a pianist. Yet today he stands preeminent as perhaps the greatest of all pianists, towering above all the great players of recent years, save only Paderewski. Hearing him last evening, one felt that through the alchemy of Rachmaninoff's playing the very spirit of the piano, and of all great pianists was hovering near, Chopin, Liszt, and Schubert among them.

The opening prelude and fugue in A minor had delicacy, clarity, and emotional depth that must establish Bach as a truly romantic composer. If the work lacked something of the sonority and effect of massed tone that the composer intended (it was originally written for the organ), it was no fault of the performer, but can only be laid to the limitations of the piano itself. This work with its quiet commanding, prepared the way for an evening of assurance and mastery.

Beethoven followed, the Appassionata, perhaps the most beloved of all the sonatas, being the work chosen. This was all fine old lace and rich brocades in royal colors—or does one only imagine the key of the andante to suggest deep purple? Fire, passion, pathos, perhaps, at times even ecstasy, seemed to pour in great floods over the listeners, sweeping them along on its swelling tide. It was Beethoven in the old traditional manner, reminiscent of Carreno and other great artists of another day.

The second half of the program, if less profound, was more pianistic, and the romantic composers held sway. Schubert was represented by an exquisite and melious impromptu and Liszt's arrangement of his "The Trout," little heard nowadays. Then came Chopin with one of the most ethereal of the nocturnes, the one in D flat, and two mazurkas, in A minor and G major, brief pictures of Poland in miniature.

Three charming numbers from Rachmaninoff's own pen, the Humoresque, Daisies, and Oriental Sketch, were delicate and picturesque, particularly the last of the trio.

The beloved Liszt Sonetto del Petrarca and the brilliant eleventh Rhapsody closed the formal program. Two encores were played, Tschaikowsky's "Troikaen Treneau," and the artist's own Prelude in C sharp minor.

What shall one say of a great artist like Rachmaninoff, who always gives all one expects and then forever goes beyond with unexpected and undreamed of beauties? On going again to hear such a one, no comment more eloquent can be made than as on returning to an old beloved friend, one says simply, "He is there."

A. C.