

PITTSBURGH

# Rachmaninoff Is Soloist In Own Opus

**Bakaleinihoff Wields  
Baton Before Record  
Crowd at Mosque**

By Donald Steinfirst

The largest audience of the season greeted Vladimir Bakaleinikoff, the assistant conductor of the Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra, as he stepped onto the conductor's dais last night at Syria Mosque while Fritz Reiner is taking his well-earned mid-season vacation. Sergei Rachmaninoff, the distinguished Russian pianist, composer and conductor, was the soloist in the Schumann Concerto and in his own Rhapsodie on a Theme by Paganini, and to round out an extremely well-balanced and well-chosen program, Dr. Bakaleinikoff added the Unfinished Symphony of Schubert to pair with the romantic Schumann and the dashing Stravinsky "Firebird" Suite to match with the "Paganini Variations."

Bakaleinikoff's stature as a conductor continues to grow. Last night the orchestra played superbly for him, but in the final analysis, it was his interpretation of the music he played that raised the concert to such a high level. His Schubert was a masterpiece of soft restrained romanticism.

### Firebird Suite Well Played

Stravinsky's "Firebird" Suite was a genuine tour-de-force. The music that once sounded so bizarre and unreal to our ears is now, of course, accepted as a part of the every-day repertoire—even old-hat, in spots—yet Bakaleinikoff made it ring with dash and glamour, and the Symphony played with an amazing vigor and polish. Dr. Bakaleinikoff's high musicianship shone through the playing of this work as he guided the various choirs through the intricacies of the music and Rachmaninoff, himself a conductor of note, was so impressed with the orchestra and Bakaleinikoff that he seated himself on the stage to better hear and observe. This was a singular honor for both orchestra and conductor. At the end, the ovation was as spontaneous as it was intense bearing tribute to the orchestra.

### Shows Great Vigor

We have never before heard Rachmaninoff play his Paganini Variations, and we stand amazed at his tremendous vigor and capabilities for the great pianist is no longer a young man. Technically, the Rhapsodie is frightfully demanding. Musically, it is extremely attractive. The variations are a work of skill, the so-called Paganini Theme being treated to almost every kind of variation that the piano is capable of producing. The treatment is hardly modern as we know modern music, but it does delve into syncopation for a few bars and there is just the barest hint of jazz feeling.

We found Rachmaninoff unhappy in the performance of the Schumann Concerto. In addition to adopting irregular tempos which kept Bakaleinikoff in difficulty as he played, the pianist was guilty of playing long notes, and was unable in so many places to play with happy phrasing. The first movement of the concerto was the most disappointing. The piano section of the orchestra was a point in his performance which Rachmaninoff finds most annoying. This was a non grata performance which was repeated to the Mosque.