

## FINE CONCERT BY RACHMANINOFF

Famous Pianist Appears in  
Smith College Course—  
Capacity Audience at John  
M. Greene Hall

By FRANCIS REGAL

Northampton, Feb. 15—Sergei Rachmaninoff gave a piano recital this evening in John M. Greene hall as the fourth concert in the Smith college course. A long queue of students and others stood waiting on the chance of getting a seat at the last moment, and if the stage had been available every inch of it could have been sold, but Mr. Rachmaninoff, as is natural, dislikes having his auditors at such short range. Tonight's furor may have recalled to some people in the audience his first appearance in Northampton, which was also one of the first in America. He played in the much smaller auditorium, which was then the only place available for concerts, and even there his audience seemed small. To people who hung about for a chance to meet him he said with careful distinctness: "I—do—not speak English but—I—am learning." That was not his only early appearance; 19 years ago he gave a program of his own compositions and another would have been eagerly welcomed tonight, reluctant as all would have been to forego the fine program which he actually gave.

That Rachmaninoff's fame as a composer, a fame both expanded and consolidated since his first visit, adds immensely to his prestige as a pianist is a matter of course, yet if he had written nothing but the popular prelude, which was the only example of his music on tonight's program, he would still be recognized as a great pianist. In virtuosity he would perhaps not appear very remarkable in a day when so many pianists do miraculous things, but his large heavy fingers do with almost lethargic ease whatever they are called upon to do, and one always feels that behind them are a mind and a soul and that both are above trivialities. It was both great playing and the playing of a great man.

The program was interesting and unusual and opened with an ingenious and carefully arranged sequence. First came the Beethoven sonata, popularly known as the "Moonlight Sonata," but its real name is "Sonata quasi fantasia," or sonata in the style of a fantasia, its first movement not being in the usual sonata form. This was followed by Liszt's "Fantasia quasi sonata," or fantasia in the style of a sonata with the legend "After Reading Dante," and to complete the sequence there was Chopin's beautiful "Fantasia," not in the style of anything. Nothing was lacking but a term at the other end of the series—say a Mozart sonata not in the style of anything. In "fantasia" and all it stands for we may see the encroachment in the 19th century of the romantic spirit upon the formal classical tradition, so that eventually even a medley of operatic airs came to be dignified as a fantasia.

It may have been due merely to the normal warming up of a pianist to his work that Mr. Rachmaninoff's playing grew steadily more interesting as he went on. In the Beethoven he was not quite at ease and even the slightest flaw in dynamic proportions shows out in this work. But in the Liszt there were exquisite passages and the Chopin Fantasia was full of magic. Poetic and beautiful also was his playing of a Chopin group comprising the C sharp minor scherzo, the C minor polonaise, and the E flat major polonaise with the "Andante spianato" in which the cantabile was entrancing. The rest of the program was lighter, a charming "Fairy Tale," opus 34, No. 1, by Medtner, a composer whose vogue is deservedly growing; Rachmaninoff's familiar prelude, and the Strauss-Taussig Valse Caprice No. 1. At the close he gave three encores, including one of the A flat waltzes of Chopin.

The Smith college concerts increasingly attract visitors from Springfield and other places without a feasible radius, but tickets are hard to get. Those who were disappointed tonight may perhaps be able to console themselves by going to Mount Holyoke college tomorrow evening at 8 o'clock for the recital by the great Spanish cellist, Pablo Casals—his only appearance herabouts for the season. He will play a fine program, including a Handel sonata, the Saint-Saens concerto, a Bach adagio, variations by Beethoven on a theme by Mozart, and a number of modern things.