

Rachmaninoff Superb Artist Gives Concert

County Center Audience
Receives His Program
With Enthusiasm

By GOODSIR GARDINER

WHITE PLAINS, Feb. 10—Rachmaninoff, the master, brought his supreme artistry and transcendent ability as one of the greatest pianists of all time to the County Center last night.

Twenty-five hundred persons sat enraptured through a program which demonstrated amply the superb musician's extraordinary memory and technique. Several hundred more music lovers undoubtedly were absent from the concert because of the severe weather.

Rachmaninoff is a pianist of immense power, yet with an exquisitely delicate touch at moments producing the most pianissimo effects to charm his hearers and hold them breathless. He is accurate and precise in his observance of rhythm and meter and his phrasing and definition are faultless. His legato in rapid scale and arpeggio passages are wonderfully beautiful and the arabesques of perception he attains unusual adroitness is necessary to the hand.

Dramatic concentration is apparent in all his passages and through delicacy and sensitiveness of perception he attains unusual adjustment of musical values. It is fascinating to watch his fingers and hands; he confines whatever motion is necessary to the hand and finger muscles, displaying marvellous flexibility and elasticity.

The master opened his program with a remarkable reading of Beethoven's "Variations in C Minor," an intricate work by the greatest composer known to mankind. Rachmaninoff's scholarly development of the theme was astounding, although the piano, probably because of atmospheric conditions, did not respond fully.

Schubert's "Rondo" followed, played with exquisite delicacy. Schumann's emotional and romantic content was emphasized in the "Carnaval" opus. Rachmaninoff played its 19 chapters, giving a perfect reading. The "Pierrot" and the two valse were beyond description in their loveliness.

In the second group, the master played two Chopin numbers—a "Nocturne" which was indescribably beautiful, and a "Ballade." Rachmaninoff seemed to have stepped into the actual character of Chopin, that poet of the piano, so appealingly did he interpret these delicate songs.

Two of the pianist's own "Preludes" followed, played only as a master composer can play masterly compositions. There is a rugged and impetuous beauty, interlaced with tender lyric figures and a touch of martial and sturdy rhythm in all Rachmaninoff's works, and these two "Preludes" were no exception.

The Taussig arrangement of Weber's "Invitation to the Dance," as played by Rachmaninoff, cannot be paid tribute to in mere type-written words. Opening with a simple phrase, then the joyous waltz—vivid, youthful, then the languorous mood in three-four tempo, finally the end of the dance. A picture in music, if ever there was one, and a picture painted so skillfully by Rachmaninoff that it became real.

The Borodine "Scherzo" preceded this last. The master, generous as always, favored his audience with several encores—and then struck the three opening notes of his famous "Prelude in C Minor." Applause greeted these three notes, and sustained applause followed the composer's playing of that which has become more closely identified with him than any other of his works. The "Prelude" has been described as the deep-toned bells of the Kremlin at Moscow pealing on a festival morning, to be answered in the second movement by all the other bells in the city. This may be legendary, but it depicts the "Prelude."

The concert, fifth in the Olney series, was preceded by an organ prelude played by George B. Lovelady, an excellent musician.