

# Music

By Herman Wise

## SERGEI RACHMANINOFF

The largest audience Orchestra Hall has housed this season was present Friday night to hear the great and dramatic Rachmaninoff play his C-sharp minor Prelude.

Not until the master pianist had played this popular work as the last of a long list of encores did the audience consider leaving the auditorium. That the soloist had performed for them music of Beethoven, Scarlatti, Chopin, Scriabin, Borodin, Rubinstein, Dohnanyi and others apparently mattered precious little.

Everyone wanted the Prelude, and if it took hours of applauding and cheering to obtain it, that, too, would be forthcoming. Knowing this, Rachmaninoff slyly asked, "Do you want to hear the C-sharp minor Prelude?" Whereupon there was a near explosion, for the concert had become a perfect success.

This single effort of Rachmaninoff, at least in the public mind, had done more, perhaps, to establish the soloist's lasting fame than his symphonies, his concertos, his songs, or the fact that he is one of the world's foremost pianists. Wherever Rachmaninoff appears he cannot escape playing the Prelude, least of all in Detroit.

He has caught the public fancy in this respect much like Fritz Kreisler with his "Caprice Viennoise" and "Liebestraum." Neither artist can escape the performance of these works, come what may. Each is helpless against the situation.

Rachmaninoff provided a flawless evening of piano playing. His Beethoven variations and Scarlatti sonatas were towers of strength and were presented with impressive authority. Only the Chopin B-minor sonata seemed to suffer, being unusually cold and formal.

The group of shorter compositions following the intermission captivated the listeners. These included the "Poeme" and Etude of Scriabin, Medtner's "Fairy Tale" Borodin's Scherzo, Rubinstein's Barcarolle, the soloist's own Etude and Prelude and the Etude-Caprice of Dohnanyi, a truly remarkable composition.

Rachmaninoff made simple work of each and amazed the audience with his brilliant technique and singing tone. His strong sense of the dramatic prevailed in nearly every reading.

The audience overflowed to the stage and orchestra pit, and many persons stood. Standing or sitting, all were thrilled with the performance, an evening of magnificent music.