

RACHMANINOFF DELIGHTS HEARERS

Russian Composer and Pianist
Plays to Large Audience at Au-
ditorium—Recital is Inspiring

A recital of exceeding beauty and interest was given last evening in the Auditorium by the Russian composer and pianist, Sergel Rachmaninoff, to a large audience which included many musical amateurs who were already devoted admirers of his compositions. It was not his first appearance in Springfield, but his admiration previously awakened by his playing was deepened last evening; he is in fact one of the most interesting pianists of our time, and if his art as an interpreter is not even yet adequately appreciated it is because he first won fame as a composer—a bit of good fortune, on the whole, for a musician to get the public to take his compositions seriously.

Rachmaninoff has won a secure place in the front rank of the Russian composers of his time, and his talent as a pianist speaks for itself. Although last night he seemed somewhat oppressed, a weary Titan bending over his task, there was neither gloom nor fatigue in his playing, which throughout was exquisite and inspired, with the subtle nuances which are the great Slavic contribution both to the literature and to the technic of the piano. A tall, large-framed man of strongly Russian physiognomy, he has like many of his compatriots strong heavy hands admirably shaped for playing, and remarkable suppleness of touch, yielding without effort sudden clangorous power when that is needed, and purling deliciously in scales and embellishments. He played first Mozart's ninth sonata, giving it almost the delicacy and sweetness of a string quartet, and followed it with five of Mendelssohn's "Songs without words" Nos 32, 3, 47, 37 and 17, all played with Mendelssohnian simplicity and suavity. These included the "Venetian Barcarole" and "Hunting Song" and for encore he played the "Spinning Song" with no less charm.

The full measure of his power, however, came in the superb Chopin group, which opened with the G minor "Ballade," an inspired work, played with inspiration and with perfect art. It was followed by a waltz and by the "Barcarole," one of the loveliest of all Chopin's works and too much neglected by concert pianists; seldom has its poetic beauty been so perfectly expressed as it was last evening by Mr. Rachmaninoff. For encores he played two Chopin waltzes in G flat and C minor. After this group came two of the pianist's own compositions, "Polichinelle," opus 3, and "Barcarole," opus 10. Both were so familiar that the audience could see the fallacy of the tradition that composers play their own works badly. It was a fascinating performance and made one wish for a joint recital of Rachmaninoff's music, with a Russian singer to interpret some of his beautiful songs, and the composer at the piano.

The closing number was Liszt's "Rhapsodie Espagnole," perhaps not among the most interesting of Liszt's works, but beautifully played, and for encore the pianist played his "Prelude," a great favorite with amateurs, the first chords of which brought such applause as at an operatic concert greets the prelude to "La donna e mobile," or the toreador's song from "Carmen." And what greater tribute can a musician in a far land get than to find his music a household word? The concert was under the management of Rudolph and Albert Steinert, and the next regular concert in the Steinert series will be a violin recital by Fritz Kreisler on Thursday evening, December 9.