

SPLENDID RECITAL BY RACHMANINOFF

Parsons's Filled to Capacity on Appearance of Favorite Again.

There was a time, once, when a piano recital seemed to have terrors for many people and audiences were not always as large as the concert hall would accommodate. But Parsons's theater last evening could not well have held more people than were crowded into it to hear Sergei Rachmaninoff play, and the splendid audience gave the great pianist a royal reception.

Mr. Rachmaninoff as composer and player is no stranger here. He played here with the Boston Symphony when that orchestra gave one of his large works; he has been heard in recital. His quality is known and appreciated and last evening's playing undoubtedly added to the esteem in which he is held by Hartford music-lovers. His varied program served to show his powers admirably and his interpretations were most attentively followed and most heartily applauded.

In the three "Ballades" which he chose as his first numbers—the Liszt No. 2, Grieg's opus 23 and (first of a group) Chopin's No. 3—Mr. Rachmaninoff had some very fine and effective contrasts to make and made them brilliantly. Differing very greatly are the thunders of tone in the first two numbers; Liszt rumbles and roars in the bass in tremendous effects, while the differently brilliant Grieg makes his attack of colossal sound direct and clear. Splendid melody sings in both; in the Liszt work it seems to outride the storm to a lovely ending; Grieg's graces of phrase take butterfly touches of the artist's fingers at times and again shine in the brilliance of the piano's fullest tones. And the familiar lovelinesses of the Chopin song came in a reading that differed greatly from many we have heard. It has frequently been played more seductively, more sentimentally; but seldom if ever has it been heard here played as it was played last evening, to win its way by sheer force of its interpretation combined with some of the most lovely phrasings of its melodies. Altogether a very highly individual and effective reading is that of Mr. Rachmaninoff in the matter of the Chopin Ballade No. 3.

The Nocturne (opus 27) was beautifully played, the D-flat major Valse's melody was given in all its beauties and the cascades of tone that preceded the melody flowed in unbelievable swiftness. And the stately measures of the Scherzo (opus 39) were delightful in their charm and grace. The added number after the Chopin group was the Valse, opus 70, No. 1 (posthumous)—beautifully done; and the added number after the Greig Ballade was the crisply played Turkish March from Mozart's A-major sonata.

Spontaneous applause greeted the opening measures of the famous Rachmaninoff C-sharp minor Prelude which the composer substituted on the program for his "Elegie" and his Polka "de W. R." was played with splendid spirit and charm. Then Dohnanyi's Etude (Capriccio) was given a most brilliant rendition, the player's own arrangement of Kreisler's Liebeslied proved very lovely in its melodic grace and Liszt's "Venezia e Napoli" Tarantella rounded out a very delightful program—to which was added Tchaikowsky's "Troika" as a last response to great applause.