

## RACHMANINOFF GENIUS GIVES INTEREST TO HACKNEYED PIECES

Sergei Rachmaninoff returned to Indianapolis Sunday afternoon, after a year's absence, and gave a recital of music for the pianoforte at the Murat under the direction of the Ona B. Talbot Fine Arts Association.

The oftener this great Russian is heard the deeper grows the conviction in the collective mind of succeeding audiences that he ranks among the very best; that his art subtly improves each time he is heard, and that of all pianists he is, on the whole, what may be called the most satisfying, for want of a better word. His capabilities are seemingly without limit. He possesses a technique that never fails to arouse admiration, no matter how frequently one has heard him play. His tone may be as delicate as the finest gossamer or it may be tremendously powerful, but it always has color, and always bespeaks the true musician. Whether the composition be lively and fleet or lusty and strong, it is played with the same keen interpretative qualities, qualities that disclose a fitting sense of restraint and a deep and broad artistry.

Rachmaninoff is imbued with the spirit of a genius. In his music there is an elusive something that causes the listener to be moved unwontedly. Even the most familiar compositions have a deal of freshness under his hands. One forgets that he has heard them innumerable times, for it seems to one that one is hearing them for the first time as they should be heard. The mere mechanics of his playing, prodigious and amazing as they are, are forgotten in the joy of hearing music superbly played. No praise is too high for these inherent gifts, for few men are showered with them so abundantly.

Sunday afternoon's program was played with all the brilliancy and inspiration of which this artist is

capable. All of Rachmaninoff's genius was needed, in fact, to make the program interesting, for it was made up of the most conventional piano compositions that one could find. Since there was nothing in the entire five groups that called for any exceptional understanding, the joy of the afternoon lay in hearing hackneyed numbers given in a manner that caused their triteness to be forgotten—something of an accomplishment. The pieces were no doubt eagerly listened to by young students of the piano, but they did not deserve an intense concentration from the rest, for they said nothing new, and had simply the novelty of being presented by a master.

Haendel's "Aria con variazioni," the opening number, was presented in severely classic style, with crisp tone and becoming austerity. Beethoven's "Sonata Pathetique," played by everybody, followed, and new meaning was given it. Weber's "Invitation to the Dance," elaborated on by Tausig, was saved from being pianoforte music by the pianist. Four Chopin numbers composed the second group, the A-flat Ballade, D-flat nocturne, a valse and a scherzo. Rachmaninoff said nearly all he had to say in these four pieces. They were certainly the most enjoyable hits in the entire afternoon. A last minute change of the program substituted the pianist's own "Daisies," a song transcription, and "Polka de W. R.," in place of the two preludes originally intended for a hearing. "Daisies" proved to be a trifle, and the polka was trite in theme and development. A Liszt minuet, transcribed by Rachmaninoff, and Liszt's "Second Hungarian Rhapsodie" completed the concert. The pianist introduced a cadenza into the latter number that created a favorable impression. Besides the regular program several encores were offered, among them a Chopin waltz, an etude by Dohnanyi, Rachmaninoff's elaboration of Kreisler's "Libesfreud" and the inevitable C-sharp minor prelude.