

# FINGERS OF RACHMANINOFF LONG, DAZZLING PHENOMENA

## Great Pianist Has Face Like Mussolini, But He Comes From Russia to Charm Canadians With His Marvellous Playing

Rachmaninoff has the stern and gloomy aspect of the iron Mussolini. The resemblance, however, is in the face only, for his long limbs and slight body are in direct contrast to the well-fed appearance of the Italian Premier. And, besides, nobody in the world possesses a pair of hands like Rachmaninoff's—fingers of unusual length and whiter than the keys they touch. In the hard, brilliant passages of a scherzo they seem made of steel; when he plays a Chopin waltz, they have the delicacy of a butterfly's wings and the gracefulness of one of Chopin's pretty Countesses. "God Save the King" was invested with new interest, and what might be termed a liquid pathos, when the great pianist opened his marvellous performance in Massey Hall last evening—after he had satisfactorily adjusted the curious square stool which he used instead of the customary chair.

Sergei Rachmaninoff, as he styles himself, omitting his middle name, Vassilievitch, for convenience, is just fifty and a half years old. He was born in Novgorod, Russia; studied at the Moscow and Petrograd Conservatories, and for several years conducted the Moscow Opera during

the reign of the late Czar. When he came to America five years ago he was offered the conductorship of the Boston Symphony Orchestra, which he promptly refused, stating that he much preferred his own concert work.

Though he has been called the pianist-priest, Rachmaninoff has a wife and two grown-up daughters, one of them attending Columbia University and the other teaching in a private school in one of the States. His estates in Russia having been confiscated by the Government, he has definitely decided to make his home in America, and has bought a place on Riverside Drive, New York City.

"Do you think we are too greedy?" The Globe asked, meeting him in the corridor behind the stage, during one of those tense moments when he was trying to decide whether or not to play again for the stamping, cheering crowd demanding his return to the stage.

"Greedy?" Oh, no, no! I do not mind," he said, with a sigh of calm resignation, wiping his finger-tips daintily with his handkerchief and frowning thoughtfully. "I do not mind, you know," he repeated, and went back in another attempt to fill the esthetic maw.