

AUTOCRAT OF THE PIANO

RACHMANINOFF DID AS HE PLEASED
WITH HIS AUDIENCE.

**Recital Last Night in Convention Hall
Drew Good-Sized Audience—Of
Course He Played "the"
Prelude.**

Crouched over his piano on the stage of Convention hall, Sergei Rachmaninoff last night again demonstrated the complete sway he exerts over his public. There was not a moment that he was not indisputably the czar; the autocrat of the piano.

His audience was there (a good sized audience) to see Rachmaninoff the composer and to hear Rachmaninoff the pianist. The interest attached to the hackneyed C sharp minor prelude might indicate that the former classification was in the majority, were it not evident that the Russian is quite as much master of the piano as he is of composition. The prelude was saved for the very last, but when its "motto theme" rang out, the usual ecstatic applause greeted it.

The Mendelssohn *variations serieuses* began the program, and the audience rather liked them. The Chopin came next, a fantasy, a nocturne and a scherzo, and then things began to warm up. The Chopin was full of violent contrast, a concomitant of the Russian temperament, perhaps, but a most effective agent in propagating the Rachmaninoff idea of Chopin. There was less emphasis on the color side, and more on the rhythms, with the result that especially in the scherzo there was a marked "aliveness," electric in its effect on the house, which demanded an encore and got the E flat Chopin waltz (Op. 18).

The composer played his program in two sittings, the second of which began with nine short Scriabin pieces, the last an etude. In the Scriabin, in his own three pieces that followed, and especially in the Tchaikowsky dance played for the last encore, Rachmaninoff and the music seemed one. They sometimes made terrific pianistic demands, but the mechanics did not show, because the pianist has what might be called a "utilitarian technic"; one for use only and not for exhibition purposes.

An imaginative and musicianly composer herself, the pianist displayed a marked consideration for the composers whose things he played last night. He played structurally, if there is such an expression. Every tiny note fitted and the impression somehow grew as the program lengthened that if there had been any non-essential notes they would