

## BRILLIANT RUSSIAN PIANIST-COMPOSER WINS OVATION HERE

Packed House At Academy  
Held Spellbound By Playing  
of Sergei Rachmaninoff

AUDIENCE APPARENTLY  
UNWILLING TO LEAVE

Sergei Rachmaninoff, Russian pianist-composer, very calmly and without affectation of any sort, demonstrated his brilliance to an audience that packed the Academy of Music last night, sat fairly spellbound for nearly two hours before his magnificent artistry, and then gave him an ovation such as an artist has received seldom before in this city. At the end of the program the audience, unwilling to let him go, called him back again and again, and finally with a great shout almost demanded that he play more. And he did.

He played a program filled with color and touched with the fire of his genius, yet he played without resort to any of the mannerisms which so commonly attach to many of his distinguished contemporaries. He did not have long hair to toy with; he sat down comfortably on the piano stool, and apparently had no remarks to mumble concerning the temperature inside the theater, or the state of the weather. He appeared much like the business man, seriously setting about the business of making music. And before he had finished his first number it was apparent to that packed house that he was making an immense success of it.

Rachmaninoff plays with a style all his own. There is a crispness, a freshness about his playing that gives it a vigor and a strength in sharp contrast to the languorous atmosphere which surrounds the music of some other masters. Without apparent exertion he can race through a crashing, voluminous passage with the sounding of cymbals and drums and full orchestral harmonies, only to leave off in an instant and sweep as lightly as the song of a bird into some fanciful, eerie strain that trips off his fingers as gracefully as the trickling of a brook. As quickly it is converted back again, perhaps, into some crashing crescendo of beautiful sound.

Last night's program opened with Caprice, Air de Ballet, from Alceste, by Gluck-Saint-Saens, a difficult number, and one calculated to demonstrate, at the outset, the mastery of this man. He next played Schumann's Sonata in G-minor, and played it so brilliantly that he was subject to several calls, and was compelled to play an encore, which he chose from one of his own compositions.

Three Chopin numbers were his third regular offering, after which he played his own Etude Tableau, and his Prelude in G sharp minor, perhaps his most popular and one of his most beautiful creations. He closed with Kunstlerleben, a Strauss-Godowsky composition, and gave several encores at the end, his own preludes.

Rachmaninoff, himself a composer, who will rank, perhaps, with the greatest masters of his age, gives his interpretations of these masters an intimacy and an understanding which many others, perhaps, cannot achieve. Over and above the interpreting sense, his playing in many respects is unique. His technique is brilliant, his tone shading and coloring is an artistry of the highest possible type.

It would appear somewhat superfluous to dwell here at any length on the reasons which place Rachmaninoff above so many of his fellows in this greatest of the arts. He sets about the business of playing the piano with such an apparent good nature, and with such calm devotion to the affair at hand, that he immediately wins a way into the hearts of his audience, and stays there. When he rises to acknowledge the inevitable roar of applause, a friendly sort of smile twines around his lips, and that seems to add some to his playing, too.

The program last night was a well chosen program, built up with an eye to the greatest effect possible in so short a time. In it Rachmaninoff had an opportunity to demonstrate many of his innumerable abilities, and to give his audience a hint here and there of the extreme heights to which his genius had reached. And his music was the type that pleased, as well.

Last night's concert was one of the most brilliant in recent years. There is no doubt that Rachmaninoff will be established beside, if not above, the other great artists Norfolk has been fortunate in hearing in the last half dozen years, or so.

—JOSEPH LESLIE.