

PACKED HOUSE FOR RUSSIAN COMPOSER

Rachmaninoff Acclaimed by Music Lovers in First Local Appearance.

As a tribute to the world-famous composer, Vancouver music lovers on Wednesday afternoon vied with each other to secure seating accommodation at the Orpheum to hear Sergel Rachmaninoff on his first appearance in this city. Long before the time scheduled for the recital the "sold out" sign was prominently displayed in the foyer of the theatre. With the Dumbells show tardy in giving up their place before the spotlight, the pianist did not get his chance until 6:40 o'clock.

When the great Russian, who has contributed several numbers to the list of the classics, appeared, he was heartily acclaimed, his reception being in the nature of an ovation throughout the all-too-short programme. Lacking mannerism, Rachmaninoff enabled his audience to devote its attention to the works in hand and to say that they found a receptive note in the heart of every one present is putting it mildly.

The pianist chose for his programme selection by Liszt, in which he undoubtedly appeared to the best advantage; Beethoven, Chopin, Schumann, Gluck-Saint Saens and several of his own compositions. He introduced some unique features in pedalling, which gave the hundreds of teachers and students may new ideas. Outstanding in the performer's work was the refreshing brilliance and tonal effects in his left hand.

Rachmaninoff's pianissimos were perfect to a degree and were a source of sincere enjoyment. In the andantino movements in several of his numbers he had a wonderfully sensitive touch, yet every note, regardless of tempo, was enunciated with that clarity of tone which stamps the great musician. His listeners were enraptured, too, with the wonderful rhythm which he displayed in truly masterful manner in every number portrayed on the pianoforte.

As before stated, Rachmaninoff kept his best numbers—those by Liszt—to the end of his programme. In the first, the "Sonnetto del Petrarca," he was heard in a series of sparkling runs which thrilled his hearers. The "Polonaise," too, was a masterful presentation, after the playing of which he was recalled several times, responding with some of his own compositions, including his own arrangement of Moussorgsky's "Hopak" and "Troeka."

The seldom heard "Variations in C Minor" was one of the tidbits of the attractive programme, while the tone gradations in Schumann's "Sonata in G Minor" were a real treat. As is usual in Vancouver audiences, applause was heard between the presto and andantino movements, but the pianist continued without recognizing it.

Rachmaninoff again struck a responsive chord in the Chopin numbers, showing much originality in the "Etude in E Major," and also the popular "Ballade in A Flat." In his own compositions the artist evoked enthusiastic applause for his playing of the "Etude Tableau" and the classic "Prelude in C Sharp Minor," which enjoys the same place in popular favor as does Paderewski's "Minuet in G."

Saint-Saens' arrangement of the "Caprice" and "Air de Ballet," taken from Gluck's "Alo este" (written in 1767), was one of the technical triumphs of a memorable occasion.