

RACHMANINOFF, COMPOSER-PIANIST, CHARMS MUSIC LOVERS AT CITY HALL

Sergel Rachmaninoff, the eminent Russian pianist, and composer, gave a recital in city hall last evening. This was his first appearance in Fitchburg. Although every seat in the auditorium was not filled, many music lovers were present, who testified their appreciation of this great artist by their continuous applause. According to his custom Mr. Rachmaninoff did not interrupt the continuity of his program, but at the end he graciously responded to the insistent demands of the audience by playing three encores, and even then the people were loath to let him go.

To see and listen to Rachmaninoff is to know one of the greatest artists of this generation. His mastery of technique, his supreme control of his instrument, his power to interpret the strongest or the most delicate feeling make his personality long to be remembered. As he comes upon the stage his tall figure, dignified bearing, simple and sincere manner, give immediate impression of complete self-mastery.

The program began with Andantino and Variations by Schubert-Tausig. This arrangement of Schubert's work was made by the German pianist Tausig just before his death about 1871, when he arranged various compositions of the earlier composer, Schubert. It has a lovely theme running at intervals.

Next came one of the most difficult and brilliant numbers of the evening. Liszt's Fantaisie, from Schubert's "Wanderer," one of the famous songs

of this composer which he wrote in 1816. It was remarkably executed by Mr. Rachmaninoff.

The next selection was Intermezzo in E minor and Ballade by Brahms, Opus 118, which we are told, was Brahms's last opus.

For some, the Chopin numbers for piano-forte give peculiar delight, and especially when interpreted by a great virtuoso. Rondo, Opus 16, Nocturne, and Waltz made up the fourth group.

Two compositions by Nicholas Medtner, a contemporary Russian composer, followed. Medtner was born in Moscow in 1879. Like Rachmaninoff he is both composer and pianist. There were "Fairy-tales" by him, one in F minor in which the little gnomes were evidently happy and care-free, the other in B minor when apparently there were lively goblins planning mischief.

It was a rare treat to hear Mr. Rachmaninoff play his own compositions, and he first gave one of his preludes. The audience would have been glad to hear as many more as he would have played.

The splendid Rakoczy March by Liszt was the last number. It is interesting to realize the origin of this martial piece with its crashing chords and war-like measure. The name is taken from a Hungarian whose first name was Rakoczy.

He composed a march for his soldiers in one of their wars against Austria in the 18th century and it became a most popular and inspiring incentive to his people.

After the three encores the program was brought to a close.