

**COMPOSER-PIANIST  
RACHMANINOFF PLAYS****Famous Russian Artist At-  
traction at Third Stein-  
ert Concert.**

That the art of the most widely-known of modern Russian pianists, Sergei Rachmaninoff, has perceptibly broadened since his previous appearance in Western Massachusetts (Nov. 4, 1919), was made plain in last night's Auditorium concert, third in the Steinert series for the present season. The distinguished graduate of Petrograd and Moscow conservatories, operatic conductor, composer of symphonies, and what not, now plays with the confident authority of an interpreter who well knows the depths as well as heights of the masterpieces he essays; and with it all maintains the unassuming demeanor of the genuine "artist for art's sake." He plays with abandon that has in it no trace of exaggeration. He bends low over the keyboard, to the fingering of which he gives undivided attention; and seems trying to voice a reverent appreciation for all that the fervent score of Liszt or Chopin may possess. As on the Smith College occasion, just alluded to, 19 years ago, his playing is still of the coldly intellectual, rather passionless order. It has much of the brilliance of Gabrielowitch, or Harold Bauer, but it is seldom invested with the same impression of the seemingly fathomless depths of either. Certainly the Bauer playing of the famous Liszt "D-flat Etude" was more authoritative, as an interpretation, than Rachmaninoff's, though the latter's was, from that particular viewpoint, consistent throughout.

There was undeniable charm in the great Russian's own quartet of etudes; and his C-sharp "Prelude," given after insistent recalls after the announced program was done, was one of the gems of a too-short program.

There is somewhat of melancholy in a whole evening of Slavic music, intensified by hearing such a number as that of Rachmaninoff's contemporary composer and fellow Muscovite, Alexia Scriabine. His etude is essentially Russian; and it made a strong contrast to the etude of the master Rubinstein preceding it, doubtless included for that reason. Rachmaninoff's playing of the Chopin numbers (10 of them, practically, counting both movements and encores) was altogether delightful. The peculiar rippling facility of runs and roulades, all-important in a true interpreter of the greatest of all Polish composers, is developed to a pronounced degree by this performer. The cascade of uncanny brilliance which characterizes the first etude of opus 25, the quaint elfin procession of sounds marking the second, and the semblance of the wild galloping of fairy horses in the fourth are remembered features of that group, emphasized by the magic of an almost unapproachable technique. Only a student of the utmost concentration could possibly have played the Sonata in B-minor with such eloquence, or bring out so impressively the turbulent torrent or orderly harmony with which its "presto" movement ends. It takes a real master to do that; and pianoforte mastery is but another name for Rachmaninoff, no question about it.

Three encores had to be given at the end of the concert to an audience which would not leave the hall; a Chopin waltz, and two of the pianist's own pieces. Of these two ending compositions, the "Polka, de W. R." (so the soloist writes its baptismal name), was received with great and deserved delight. An impromptu reception was held in the ante-room by the maestro before taking his train back to New York. In the course of which he found time to speak in the warmest approval of the acoustics as well as architectural beauty of the Auditorium. On New Year's Day, Jan. 1, will come the fourth concert of the Steinert series with Braslaw and De Gogorza as the stars.