

Artistry of Rachmaninoff Delights Capacity House

Sergei Rachmaninoff, one of the great names in modern music, opened the 14th series of the Tremblay Concerts at the Capitol Theatre Wednesday night before a capacity audience that included the Governor General and Princess Alice.

Known as a piano virtuoso or "one who excels in the technique of his art", Rachmaninoff's technique could scarcely be questioned in a program that demanded the best. Yet there was more than that to it.

As a matter of personal preference Beethoven's Sonata, opus 31, no. 2 was the high point of the program principally for the grace and delicacy with which the adagio was performed with its opening phrase played with crossed hands. Other passages were soft enough to amount to no more than a whisper but were clearly heard at the back of the theatre, so clear was the tone.

Liszt's Sonetto del Petrarca in Rachmaninoff's hands was a thing of surpassing beauty. It came as a surprise to those who are accustomed to hear Liszt at the end of every program as the technical tour de force of "prize" pupils. The Liszt show piece was there, of course, in the Tarantella "Venizia e Napoli" which fairly scintillated.

There are people abroad in the

world today who argue that Chopin's Sonata in B flat minor of the famous funeral march should always be played by a man. After hearing last night's rendition it is difficult to imagine a woman physically capable of the tremendous power evoked in the mighty chords of the funeral march without forfeiting the resonant equality.

Rachmaninoff played a group of his own compositions, three Etudes-Tableaux, the second particularly lighthearted in mood, and beat the audience to the draw by playing the C sharp minor Prelude. He is reported to dislike it but unless they had heard the composer play it before, few people in the audience had probably heard it really played.

The Gavotte from Bach's Partita was notable for the same grace that characterized the Beethoven.

As Rachmaninoff wished, there was no audience on the stage last night which served to increase that feeling of aloofness for which he is noted. Actually the stage audience was hardly missed by those out front. Still it was a curious grey-toned picture he made, black and white clothes, pale, stern face and dark hair, the famous hands reflected in the top of the piano. Austere, the younger people in the audience might find him, but not his music!

P. W.