

## Audience Thrills At Recital by Rachmaninoff

By NORMAN NAIRN

A PIANO recital by Sergei Rachmaninoff is more than likely to be a source of anticipated enjoyment. A good sized audience in expectant mood last night in the Eastman Theater was not disappointed as this great interpretative personality scattered pearls of superb pianism. The result was an ovation for the performer.

A memorable evening of piano playing began with Rachmaninoff's own transcription of Bach's Partita in E major for violin alone, where the clear outlines were preserved in an interpretation that was a model of taste and intelligence, full of almost aristocratic expressiveness.

Who can forget the beautiful legato obtained in the adagio movement of Beethoven's Second Sonata? Rachmaninoff's feeling for this music evidently was deep and the fine dynamic distinctions proclaimed the master at his best.

Such playing as we heard in the Chopin Polonaise in C minor, the Nocturne in F sharp major and the Scherzo in C sharp minor, and in Schumann's Novelette in F sharp minor, can be described only as poetic perfection in its loveliness. Rachmaninoff is a consummate interpreter of Chopin, and the elasticity of phrasing, the range of pianistic gamut in the Polonaise, the exciting effects achieved in the Scherzo and the tone colors of the Schumann were in line with the consistency of the standards for which the virtuoso is noted.

Rachmaninoff's own Four Etude Tableaux, music of melodic saliency, and like most of Rachmaninoff's music full of charming themes, were superbly played. The variety of hues bears the stamp of his individuality.

The audience could close its eyes and revel in the superbly delicate colors of the Liszt music, the volatile "Valse Cublee," the "Sonetto del Petrarca" and the Tarantelle "Venezia e Napoli." Rachmaninoff has an affinity for the Litzian muse. The brilliance of his playing is something that belongs inherently to the music in hand and not as a display of digital prowess.

One expects encores from Rachmaninoff, and of course there was more Chopin. But after the postlude of three extras, the pianist gently closed the keyboard of the piano as a gentle hint that he'd had enough. No doubt the younger element was bent on getting the ubiquitous "Prelude in C Sharp Minor" which Rachmaninoff wrote when he was 20 years of age, but for once they failed.

And I really must disagree most heartily with the sweet young thing who was heard to remark superciliously as she left the theater, "Too bad he wasn't up to par." I wonder just what she expected. Some 2,500 other people at the Eastman found the recital unusually stimulating.