

## RACHMANINOFF WELL RECEIVED

### Famous Russian Pianist Draws Keen Interest To Own Compositions

Presenting a program in which the skill of the artist was enhanced by the understanding of the composer, Sergei Rachmaninoff, famous Russian pianist, gave the opening concert of the Birmingham Music Club's 1933-34 program Friday night at Phillips High School.

From the first number, a difficult Beethoven sonata, throughout an exacting program, Rachmaninoff was notable for the seemingly effortless manner in which he played. His hand movements attracted attention by the smoothness which emphasized their faultless technique.

The pianist modestly placed the Beethoven sonata first, but interest was naturally keenest in the selections of his own composition or arrangements, notably the transcription of the Bach sonata for violin and the famous "Prelude in C Sharp Minor."

From the first movement of the Beethoven sonata, the pianist revealed his delicacy of touch, in the trills and pianissimo notes which mark this allegro. Other features of his playing were shown in the pen-sive adagio and the allegretto, requiring sureness of touch and skill in coordinating the hand movements with the pedal manipulation.

From the first note of his transcription of the Bach sonata for violin, Rachmaninoff showed a deeper understanding than the usual pianist capable only of static interpretation of the work of others. Typical of Bach, this sonata is strikingly contrapuntal. Rachmaninoff was perfectly at ease in the vigorous prelude, in the familiar gavotte which constitutes the second movement and in the final movement, a gigue, calling for the utmost accuracy in finger work.

By special request, the pianist substituted a group of Chopin compositions for three numbers by Schumann. The substitutions were happily chosen. The first was an attractive waltz, the second a romantic nocturne and the third an ambitious ballade which, in many respects, revealed the varied talents of the pianist as well as any other number on the program.

Schubert's light and playful "Rondo, D Major," was played with obvious pleasure on the part of Rachmaninoff. This was followed by a well-chosen Debussy suite, more vigorous than is usually the case with this composer and with just enough of his manner to pique the interest.

Rachmaninoff played three of his own preludes, two together which seemed chosen for their light attractiveness, and the famous composition in C Sharp Minor. This last, played with the composer's own fire, was unhackneyed despite its familiarity.

Other numbers placed on the program included a lively scherzo by Borodine and the familiar but always varied and interesting "Invitation To the Dance," by Weber-Tausig.

Others to be presented by the Music Club this year, including artists on both the regular program and the special concerts, are: Lucrezia Bori, Dec. 12; Minneapolis Symphony Orchestra, Jan. 19; Fritz Kreisler, Feb. 7; Vienna singing boys, Feb. 15; Guy Maier, pianist, March 9, and Nelson Eddy, baritone, April 12.