

'JAZZ WILL LIVE,' RACHMANINOFF

GREAT PIANIST COMPOSER HERE FOR
CONCERT AT STRAND TONIGHT—FINE
PERSONALITY—HIS EXILE MOURNED

By WILLIAM NEWELL

Fifteen minutes with Sergel Rachmaninoff, one of the greatest of all living pianist-composers, convinced me last night that those who have a taste for jazz are not dumb—nor do they lack an appreciation of good music.

Rachmaninoff, the great pianist-composer, whose name is revered by those who know and love good music, is human above all else. His genial smile, his firm hand-clasp and his shyness invite one into his confidence. You immediately feel at ease with him.

When he plays tonight at the Strand Theatre it will be that personality that radiates through his audience as well as the genius of his art.

It was in Hotel Vancouver lobby a few minutes after he had stepped from the Seattle train that newspapermen met Rachmaninoff. A bit weary and evidencing the strain of an arduous tour, he graciously submitted to a brief interview.

Tall, broad-shouldered, with close-cropped hair, he looked no different from the average business man with his dark overcoat, black hat and cigarette.

EYES OF ARTIST

In Rachmaninoff's eyes the artist is revealed.

"Jazz? There is something about it that is fresh," the composer said. "It will last. It smells; its perfume lingers."

Rachmaninoff believes, however, that it is the symphony society that is educating the public to appreciate good music. Not the symphony that plays once in a long while, but the symphony that plays three or four times a week.

The public's desire for good music is becoming more insistent, Rachmaninoff believes, and it is the symphony that is largely responsible for this improvement in their taste.

It is an interesting fact that it was not one of his greater works that drew public attention to the genius of Rachmaninoff as a composer, but his Prelude in C Sharp Minor. Incidentally, Rachmaninoff rarely speaks of himself or his compositions.

This impressive work, product of the composer's youth, has made its way all over the world, and through it Rachmaninoff's name has come to

be known to millions who have never heard him in the concert hall.

Of this Prelude, Rachmaninoff himself has been said to have remarked:

"I cannot honestly say that the Prelude in C Sharp Minor is my favorite, and I have written others which I like better. The wider popularity which seizes upon one or another of a composer's works and leads it to be played or sung every where is something he learns to discount."

Rachmaninoff makes his home in Switzerland.

He has two hobbies—silence—and, I gathered from one of his party, his little granddaughter—whose mother is the Princess Kolkonski, Rachmaninoff's daughter.

It is with this little girl that the composer spends a great deal of his time when he is not on tour.

He is a great reader, too, mostly of the Russian classics, and he is a lover of art, works of some of the world's most famous painters hanging in his home.

MOURNS EXILE

"Russia today? I don't know," is Rachmaninoff's answer to questions concerning the land of his birth as his eyes drop.

"There is a burden which age perhaps is lying on my shoulders," he has said. "Heavier than any other, it was unknown to me in my youth. It is that I have no country. I had to leave the land where I was born, where I passed my youth, where I struggled and suffered all the sorrows of the young and where I finally achieved success. The whole world is open to me, and success awaits me everywhere. Only one place is closed to me, and that is my own country—Russia."

Rachmaninoff plays one night only in Vancouver. Although because it is Rachmaninoff, the great pianist-composer, but because it will be Rachmaninoff, the man, who will radiate through that audience by his genius, the soul of one who is intensely human.

It has been one of my greatest privileges to meet Rachmaninoff, the man.

DOMINION