

Rachmaninoff's Artistry Is Acclaimed

By J. L. Wallin

AFTER all that has been said and done, the regal mantle would undoubtedly fall upon Sergel Rachmaninoff were a king among pianists to be chosen. Considered from every angle, he emerges from the comparatively small group of possibilities as the one upon whom it would rest naturally without the slightest need for alteration.

It seems so easy, too, and so logical to vision this towering figure carry high and with aristocratic bearing and distinction the crown, the sceptre and all other insignia of such an exalted imaginary station.

At the same time it cannot be denied that some very promising princes are standing near.

On short notice the Russian composer-pianist came to Portland and gave a concert in The Auditorium Thursday night under the direction of Steers & Coman and it was in every way a typical Rachmaninoff event with the exception that the numerical strength of the audience was not up to par.

The Tausig transcription of Bach's organ choral in G minor that opened the program one felt could hardly have been done more effectively and impressively on the great pipe organ, so rich were the remurmurings of the heavy strings of the large grand. The choral was followed by Beethoven's "Sonata No. 2," opus 31, and a Chopin group, and closed the first part of the program.

The second part opened with a Liszt group including the magnificent "Funerailles," which demonstrated that the same story may be told most interestingly in many different ways. Of his own compositions, Rachmaninoff played "Prelude in G Flat Major," "Etude," "Tableau in E Flat Minor" and, as one of the extra numbers, his familiar and ever popular "Prelude in C Sharp Minor."

The Etude, however, although on the program, was offered as an extra, for instead of it after his G Flat Major Prelude, Rachmaninoff played Balakireff's Oriental phantasy, "Ismaley," which was the closing number on the printed program. "Ismaley," at the time of publication about 15 years ago, was regarded the most difficult piano number ever written, but Rachmaninoff seemed entirely unaware of any undue technical obstacles. He just played it, like that.