

AUDIENCE PLEASED WITH RARE SKILL OF RACHMANINOFF

Noted Composer Pianist
Presents Brilliant Recital
at Playhouse.

BALANCED PROGRAM

A tall, ungainly, awkward appearing man walked onto the stage of the Playhouse last night, sat down at the piano and apparently still absorbed in his own thoughts, lightly touched the keys.

After the first few chords struck, Sergei Rachmaninoff, composer pianist, had the complete attention of his audience, who would not release the musician at the conclusion of the recital until he had given three encores. Welcomed by a warm burst of applause when he appeared on the stage Pianist Rachmaninoff responded with a stiff bow, never losing his appearance of self-absorption. Only when the audience demanded, at the close of the program, that he play again, did the artist display a slight smile.

The program was opened by Mozart's "Variations," refreshing, warm, fluid and at times mildly martial. The pianist's uncanny softness at times held his audience even more attentive than his more forceful playing. At all times the unbelievably facile manual skill of Rachmaninoff, the artist, through which he executed his comprehensive art, was apparent. The interest of the audience in the skill of the artist was manifested by the desire of all, who could possibly do so, to occupy seats on the left side of the orchestra and balcony, as his hands could be seen from that side.

"Variations" was followed by Schumann's "Papillons," a selection depicting the gyrations of colored butterflies, from flower to flower. The rollicking and cavorting "Gavotte" of Gluck-Pauer, somewhat intricate and complex, was followed by the more emotionally plain Old French Gavotte, of Pauer. While the motif in the second was similar to that in the first, it was much more obvious, the tune was simpler and reminiscent of folk songs and the simpler country dance tunes.

The fourth group played consisted of a "Nocturne," "Rondo," and the "Scherzo" of Chopin. In the Nocturne, which proved a favorite with the audience, Rachmaninoff demonstrated, without any apparent effort, his uncanny range in the playing of the instrument. The "Rondo," with its liquid quality and the graceful work of the left hand, was very pleasantly executed by the artist. The "Scherzo," touching and contemplative at the beginning and ending with a bold, powerful note, was heartily applauded.

The second half of the program was opened by two preludes composed by Rachmaninoff. The first was melodious and rhythmic, and the second was more vigorous, expressive and unrestrained, giving a wider application of the pianist's ability. The hitting notes of Liszt's Valse Oubliee was followed by Liszt's "Voices of the Wood." The difficult "Valse Caprice" of Strauss-Tausig was the concluding selection of the program. It was at the end of this selection that the prolonged applause of the audience required an encore of the pianist. He played his prelude and it was greeted with appreciation by a moved audience. Two beautiful encores were played after that and the audience left, filled with warmth for the musical genius of this man.