

RACHMANINOFF IS HEARD IN CONCERT HERE

By ALVIN S. WIGGERS

The great Russian composer and pianist, Rachmaninoff, famous for 35 years for his C-sharp minor Prelude, which he is probably trying to live down, gave his first recital in Nashville Wednesday night, thanks to Mrs. Naff's efforts. Ryman auditorium, which he had expected to be crowded, contained an audience nothing to be compared with the ones which greeted Paderewski here on his n'th appearances.

Rachmaninoff, pupil of Siloti in piano and Arensky in composition, selected a strange program of played-to-death and never-played pieces. He began with a Chopin group of "Ballade, Nocturne, Valse and Polonaise." This was quite non-committal but proved to be the third of the four Ballades, the one in A flat; the fifth of the nineteen Nocturnes, the one in F-sharp; the fifth of the fifteen Valses, in A-flat, and the sixth of fifteen Polonaises, the big so-called "Drum" Polonaise.

Of each set, almost without fail, he unerringly picked out the piece played the most of recent years, which prompts one to guess whether he were playing down to a smaller city or hoping to introduce novelties.

His playing was not as big, overpowering, colossal, magnificent and lionine as we had expected. His walk and manner were timid and hesitating, but at times his playing was masterful. Wonderful technique, beauty of tone, ideal interpretations, he had all of that, but somehow he did not seem to be interested.

Of all the 32 Beethoven Sonatas he selected the hackneyed "Appassionata."

"Dedication," by Schumann-Liszt, "Smugglers," by Schumann-Tausig, "Maiden's Wish" (not Maiden's Prayer, as per program) and "The Return Home," both by Chopin-Liszt, the immortal "Serenade" of Schubert-Liszt, his own fairy-like arrangement of Schubert's dainty "Brooklet," an unheard-of piece with the cogomen, "Daisies," and the ever-lovely Spinning Chorus from Wagner's "Flying Dutchman," brushed with butterflies' wings by the magician, Liszt and played most delightfully.

The applause of the audience was of an equally uncertain and spasmodic variety, but three encores were vouchsafed with seemingly none too good a grace.

One sounded like a very empty Liszt Rhapsody by somebody else, the second was his celebrated piece, which he played very well indeed, and what seemed to be something from Bizet's "L'Arlesienne." We were unable to verify these because the manager locked the dressing room door till they slipped quietly out through the alley-door.