

RACHMANINOFF WINS ACCLAIM

By MARIE HICKS DAVIDSON

Sergei Rachmaninoff last night, at the Opera House, played such a concert that at the close the capacity audience arose as one unit and shouted bravos that resounded to the dome of the great auditorium. The great Russian pianist gave numerous encores and bowed over the footlights again and again until, finally, an attendant walked on to the stage and closed the piano.

And when the stately dean of the piano had disappeared into the wings, few would have disputed his right to the title, "the peer of them all."

TECHNIQUE AMAZES

Without any mannerism at all, the tall, pallid and spare maestro of the pianoforte addressed himself completely to the keyboard. Never once did his eyes stray from his hands as he played.

The hands, however, were but pliable instruments of a mind in which music appears to be at once a spiritual essence and a tremendous force of God-given energy.

In Scriabine or in Liszt, in the purely intellectual or the florescent, the interpretation was so logical, so utterly fluent and facile that amazement at the technique of Rachmaninoff became a kind of hypnosis. The audience succumbed to a spell in which it knew that grandeur was being made audible.

DEXTERITY HAILED

The singing tone of the Chopin "Fantaisie" was eerie with the melody and harmony. The Beethoven sonata, "Quasi una Fantasia," took on new outline under the sentient hands, and in the romantic mood of the artist and pianism became a business of titans and gods.

Rachmaninoff is essentially a dealer in chords and harmonics, but dexterity with which he takes roudades still is something for the average pianist to marvel at. Never, with all his forcefulness, does Rachmaninoff's playing take on attributes of sound and fury, as well might have happened in the Liszt number. The Russian mentality has first moulded the tone volume and then, apparently, reduced it to its relative values. The rest is sheer magic.

He plays again tonight in Oakland