

AUDIENCE HELD UNDER SPELL BY THE TOUCH OF S. RACHMINOFF

Sergei Rachmaninoff's dynamic personality and performance brought an appreciative audience under his spell Monday night at the Jefferson theatre—an audience which filled the house and was instantly responsive at his master touch.

Rachmaninoff is the perfect example of a patient and painstaking student. His concentration and marvelous co-ordination of mind and muscle combine to make him foremost as an exponent of instrumental art. Grave and dignified, he presented an impressive figure at his massive piano carried on tour.

Among the compositions of Chopin, whose music is commonly considered light in character, there are some numbers grave and full of meaning. For these Rachmaninoff seemingly shows a preference and interprets them with fidelity, probably because of the Slavic traditions held in kind.

Chopin's "Fantasy," first number of the program, held a promise of the enthralling treat to mark the evening. His "Polonaise," which type of composition Chopin popularized, was beautifully interpreted. "The Nocturne," the second number in this group, was exquisitely handled, the delicate gradations being expressive of the soft beauty of the night. Flawless technique marked the "Valse," final selection of the Chopin group. This is a popular number among pupils of the piano, though without doubt is seldom attained in such perfect rendition.

Enthusiastic and prolonged applause accorded to but few artists who have appeared in Birmingham greeted Schumann's "Carnival." The varying moods brought out gave Rachmaninoff opportunity to display not only his technical skill but also his interpretative power.

The outstanding number of his program was his own "Prelude in C Sharp Minor," enjoying probably the widest popularity of any instrumental composition today. Though his work in the treble in runs and trills is incomparable, he seems to excel in the crashing chords of the lower register. "The Prelude" afforded wonderful opportunity to exploit this preference, which shows throughout the numbers chosen for the program.

Another of his own compositions, the Serenade, was a marked contrast to the "Prelude." Soft and delicate in beauty and feeling, it brought out a different side of the composer's temperament. Moskowski's "LaJongleuse," well rendered, was enthusiastically received.

"La Campanella" (Liszt) abounded in trills and runs, giving Rachmaninoff splendid opportunity to show his mastery of fingering and his finished performance could be likened to a perfect mechanical device, only with the added beauty of an artist's human touch and expression.

Liszt's "Second Hungarian Rhapsody" was heard for the first time in many months as a concert number in Birmingham when Rachmaninoff's preference for powerful themes again was displayed. His dexterous fingers brought out the full volume of his instrument.

Rachmaninoff's own arrangement of Kreisler's haunting "Liebeslied" was a vehicle for the singing tonal qualities of the piano and his delicate treatment of this theme charmed every one.