

RACHMANINOFF IS GIVEN AN OVATION

Pianist Hailed As Master By
Large Audience At The
Jefferson.

An artist, a real one without any affectation or frills, without any need for sensationalism to win applause or inspire, but one who has through the years acquired a mastery of all the essential qualities which go to make a real virtuoso, such is Sergei Rachmaninoff, the pianist-composer, who held a large audience Monday night at the Jefferson Theater as if under a spell with his marvelous work.

Rachmaninoff is perfectly at ease when seated at his instrument and correspondingly at ease and natural in all his work, although his very personality is one which lends dignity to it and makes it the more impressive. He always took his work seriously. He still does. And that explains why the name Rachmaninoff is one which piano teachers and piano students hold almost in reverence, because it stands for the best and highest in that realm of music.

This tall, almost gaunt figure, whether standing or seated at ease at his own beloved instrument, cannot fail to impress one with a feeling that here is a real master, not only of his instrument, but one who has also learned to master himself, and this latter fact also is a far more important factor than many other artists seem to be aware of.

If Rachmaninoff shows a preference for compositions of the Chopin variety, that fact is easily explained by considering Rachmaninoff's own type and personality. However, he also can render and interpret Chopin as no other living pianist who has been heard here in recent years can interpret, and enthusiastic and prolonged applause, which at times took on the form of an ovation, was well merited and rang sincere from the lovers of music, especially those who packed the gallery and for whom Rachmaninoff evidently has a warm spot in his heart.

The opening number of the program, Chopin's "Fantasy," quickly demonstrated Rachmaninoff's mastery of the instrument and interpretative powers, while the second number, Schuman's "Carnival," gave the artist fine opportunity to display his ability to master the various shades and moods, and well he availed himself of this opportunity, so that at the close of this number he was greeted with a tremendous ovation.

Chopin's "Polonaise," one of the favorite numbers of pianists, proved another gem as interpreted by Rachmaninoff, while the "Nocturne" can only be described in some such term as exquisitely beautiful, in its soft shadings and execution, and the final selection of the Chopin group, the "Valse," often tried by piano pupils, probably never was heard by those who were present as played by such a master.

And then followed the two numbers for which many had waited with anxious anticipation, Rachmaninoff's own "Prelude in C Sharp Minor," and "Serenade," each a rare gem, which was made to shine even brighter under the touch of Rachmaninoff, and as the majestic chords of the lower register began in the first number, the audience sat as if under a spell and continued so throughout the number, followed by a storm of applause, and then relieved by the altogether different theme and interpretation of the "Serenade," also marvelously executed.

"La Jongleur," by Moszkowski, in which the technique and skill of the master was especially well displayed, was followed by the last number on the program, Liszt's "La Campanella," so brilliantly done, that the audience refused to leave their seats but joined in a tremendous ovation, to which the artist finally responded with Liszt's "Second Hungarian Rhapsody," perfect in its execution and interpretation of the spirit of the Pista, and again there came the insistent demand for still another encore, to which Rachmaninoff's own arrangement of Kreisler's "Liebeslied" was the answer.

When it was all over many enthusiasts rushed to the rear of the stage and exacted Rachmaninoff's promise that he would come again to Birmingham some time next year, and he promised, and he is certain to receive a warm welcome, not only from the Birmingham Music Teachers' Association, which so enthusiastically supported this occasion, but from the hundreds of others who were fortunate enough to hear this genuine artist, with his master touch, his grave but impressive personality and his soul-inspiring influence and work.—SIG. G. BAUER.