

## MUSIC

## THE BOSTON ORCHESTRA.

Perhaps the chief discourse should be of Mr. Sergei Rachmaninoff, instead of the Boston Orchestra, in a discussion of the concert at Carnegie Hall yesterday afternoon, for we have had the Boston Orchestra with us often, and the Russian pianist and composer disclosed himself in proper person before New Yorkers on this occasion for the first time. But there is a comforting suggestion of excellence combined with permanency in the title of the organization which comes to us once a month to curb the conceit with which provincial towns charge the American metropolis; and it seems like a belittling of it to raise any feature of its offerings to a dignity above its name. Even when it indicates fifteen minutes of a Beethoven prelude to a happily nameless tragedy upon its admirers, they are willing to forgive, and when it increases their knowledge of contemporary genius they do not permit that fact to overshadow the more enduring one that they have again enjoyed the gracious and uplifting ministrations of an organization of which even a provincial metropolis is proud. And so Mr. Rachmaninoff must take his turn in the record of yesterday's delightful meeting in Carnegie Hall.

Besides, it was the solo performer and not his music which was novel in the programme. That began with a work by an English composer who has occupied considerable attention in his native land during the last few years, but has not heretofore challenged local notice. The programme called it "The Pierrot of a Minute, a Comedy Overture to a Dramatic Fantasy of Ernest Dowson," by Granville Bantock. No reviewer of musical doings who has cut his eye teeth in incidental nowadays to quarrel with the designations chosen by composers to describe their instrumental compositions. This "Pierrot of a Minute" was a "Fantastic Poem for Orchestra in the Form of a Prelude" a short year ago, when it had its first performance at a Worcester festival; it is now a "comedy overture." No doubt it sounded then as it does now—in that respect resembling the potatoes of which the Hon. Burdwell Stone, of amiable memory, remarked, in spite of Mrs. Gifford, that they tasted the same in all languages. And yet we could wish that it had not been called an overture, for the most obvious thing about it is that it opens nothing, but plainly accompanies the incidents which Mr. Dowson sets forth in his fantastic poem, which tells of how Pierrot fell asleep and dreamed that he enjoyed the embraces of the moon maiden, for one hour of which he was willing to surrender the rest of his existence. It is music which is pretty imaginative and exquisitely scored for orchestral instruments, but it is too fragmentary and illusive to serve as anything else than incidental music to a pantomime in which the eyes might also have their pleasure. It lacks the architectural structure which we are still entitled to expect from a piece of music that seeks to stand by itself, with or without explanatory title. But, if in this sense unsatisfactory, it was yet pleasant to hear.

After this amiable diversion which opened the programme, and before the personal hero of the occasion introduced himself, the orchestra made obeisance to a great shade by playing Schumann's Symphony in C, the work which emerged from the composer's mind in a period of gloom during which he heard trumpets and drums resounding within him. How completely he became himself before the painful creative period was over Mr. Fielder demonstrated by a positively thrilling performance of the splendid finale. Nor did any portion of the work seem to call for the apologetic tone in which Schumann himself spoke of it.

Mr. Rachmaninoff played the solo part of his second pianoforte concerto. Three artists had tried in vain before him to awaken appreciation of its nobility and beauty. Mr. Gabelowitch was fairly successful, but M. Pugno and Miss Lerner labored in vain against the weight which the orchestra laid upon their performances. Mr. Fielder showed that though the work is heavily scored it is yet translucent and Mr. Rachmaninoff proved that a manly, unaffected and rhythmically inclusive reading of its solo part can lift it to the place in the general scheme which it ought to have and redeem it from the faults which heretofore seemed inherent in it. The concert presented him in an admirable light, both as composer and performer, and insured him a cordial welcome when he shall return to give a more varied and illuminative exhibition of his powers. As usual, the orchestra ended the concert with a scintillant slow piece—this time Richard Strauss's "Don Juan."

H. E. K.