

MUSIC

By James Gibbons Huneker.

Russian Symphony Orchestra.

When a pianist of the artistic magnitude of Serge Rachmaninoff plays a composition of his own it is always a joy redoubled. At Carnegie Hall yesterday afternoon he repeated his performance of the previous evening under the baton of Modeste Altschuler and with the accompaniment of the Russian Symphony Society Orchestra. His concerto in G minor, No. 1, Opus 1, remodelled, was his offering, and effective music it proved under his fleet fingers and with his mastery of dynamics. An early work, it betrays many influences generously levied upon, yet bearing the imprint of this Russian's individuality. Tchaikovsky is in the opening; the charming figuration often suggests Chopin. The Andante is a nocturne, almost a soliloquy, and not pregnant with meaning, the finale vivacious and brilliant. Naturally we prefer the second concerto. This first concerto received its initial performance in this city with the Dutch virtuoso, Martinus Sieveking, at the keyboard in 1900, and at Carnegie Hall. Sieveking, who is an extraordinarily powerful pianist, also played the composition with success at Vienna 1901, Berlin 1907, and Aix-les-Bains 1900. It is singularly effective and written in the idiom of the pianoforte. The composer received an ovation yesterday, being recalled a half dozen times. It would seem that this is a Rachmaninoff season.

The most enjoyable orchestral work of the afternoon was not Stravinsky's first symphony in E flat, but a suite by Rimski-Korsakoff, "Tsar-Saltan," which was produced as an opera based on Pushkin folk poems, and at Moscow Nov. 10, 1900. It by no means equals in interest either the Scheherazade Suite or "Le Coq-d'Or," but it is characteristic Rimski-Korsakoff, the music chiefly martial and the scoring highly colored. Before it the Stravinsky and Scriabin music paled. The symphony of Stravinsky boasts a clever, chattering scherzo, which might have been utilized as a Gilbert and Sullivan patter song. The linto has the melancholy of the Slav, but the other two movements are academic. The idyl from Scriabin's symphony No. 2 was not representative, being largely excerpts from "Tristan und Isolde." We were glad to hear several finger-slips made by Rachmaninoff in the massive cadenza to the opening allegro of his concerto. They proved him a man, not a machine. His cantilena is not luscious, yet it is penetratingly musical. He handles his instrument orchestrally.