

RACHMANINOFF AGAIN SCORES GREAT SUCCESS

Great Pianist Plays His Own Concerto With the Orchestra.
Rabaud Symphony Given

Sergei Rachmaninoff, gigantic alike in physique and in musical personality, was the feature of yesterday afternoon's concert of the Philadelphia Orchestra at the Academy of Music. He played his own concerto in F sharp minor with an orchestration which he revised after his flight from the Russian Bolsheviki.

The concerto is his first published work, being opus 1. It was composed before he was nineteen years old and is an astoundingly mature work for that age, considered simply from the thematic material and the way in which it is developed, without regard to the revised orchestration. Even at that time the concerto bears the hallmark of the mature Rachmaninoff in its seriousness of character, its melancholy, though without the hopelessness which characterizes so much of the modern Russian music, and in the magnificent musical workmanship with which it is carried out.

As the concerto stands, it will compare favorably with the second, the one in C minor, which Mr. Rachmaninoff played here some time ago with the Boston Orchestra. There is in the first perhaps a little more elasticity of thought, as shown by the stronger contrasts of the main themes, but the second is the more homogeneous in its entirety. The new orchestration played yesterday is very effective, especially in the use of the various melodic instruments, in their tonal relation to the piano and to each other, besides being conservative in the dynamic qualities.

Mr. Rachmaninoff's playing has been discussed in these columns several times this season, and yesterday's performance gave no reason to change in any way the high estimates then given. Great as a pianist, he is still greater as a musician, and it is this quality in his playing that gives him a peculiar position among the leading pianists of the present day. He plays like a composer, with his thought always concentrated on the composition as a whole and not alone on his solo part. Beauty of tone and technique he has in abundance, but in his playing the artistry of interpretation is so much the predominating element that the hearer never considers the mechanics. He is unquestionably one of the greatest interpretative as well as one of the greatest creative artists of the musical world.

The concert opened with Lalo's "Rhapsodie Norvegienne," a work of much melodic and harmonic charm, and excellently played. In spite of the title the composer has contrived to convey the atmosphere of southern France or Spain, not so much in the thematic material as in the persistent use of the Bolero and other Latin rhythms as well as in the exotic orchestration.

After the concerto Mr. Mattson announced that Mr. Stokowski, who has been suffering with grip, felt himself exhausted and had asked Mr. Rich, the concertmaster and assistant conductor, to lead the symphony. For the second time in two weeks Mr. Rich assumed the baton at a moment's notice and conducted with skill and understanding.

The symphony was that in E minor, by Henri Rabaud, conductor of the Boston Orchestra. It is a fine work, having much more of the real symphonic spirit than most French works of this character and is artistically worked out and orchestrated. The second and third movements are the most attractive. The second is a tuneful slow movement of much beauty of melody, and the third a lively, joyous scherzo. The first and last movements are in strict form and are scholarly, though perhaps with not quite the melodic inspiration of the middle movements. The entire composition is a splendid example of the conservative modern French school, being sane in thought, harmony and composition, while retaining all the poetry and the distinctive nationalism of the composer.