

PHILA. ORCHESTRA

Appearance of Rachmaninoff as Assisting Artist Feature of Concert

There were only three numbers on the programme presented by the Philadelphia Orchestra before a large audience at the Academy of Music yesterday afternoon, but perhaps the concert was all the more enjoyable by reason of its comparative brevity. Its preponderant and most noteworthy feature was the appearance as assisting artist of Mr. Sergei Rachmaninoff, the distinguished Russian pianist, who had elected to be heard in his own Concerto No. 1 in F sharp minor. No fault can be found with his choice, for this particular concerto is one of the most interesting and artistic among modern compositions of its class. It is constructed with a fine sense of proportion and the ingratiating thematic material which it employs is developed with a masterly skill and a high degree of effectiveness. As can be imagined, it was admirably played, with vigor and eloquence and a brilliant technique, and the audience was so much pleased that the number of recalls to which the performer was obliged to respond may well have taxed his patience.

The symphony was the one by Henri Rabaud, the present director of the Boston Symphony Orchestra, in E minor, No. 2. This work was introduced to the Philadelphia public by

Mr. Stokowski some six years ago and for reasons which no intelligently appreciative music lover will have any difficulty in understanding it is one of his special favorites in the category of which it belongs. That he should have been unable to interpret it upon the occasion under comment must have been a keen disappointment, but he has been suffering from an attack of the grip, which it will be remembered, prevented him from officiating last week, and after he had led the orchestra through the Lalo Norwegian Rhapsody, with which the proceedings opened, and the Rachmaninoff concerto, physical exhaustion necessitated his relinquishment of the baton to Dr. Thaddeus Rich, whose gifts as a conductor were once more convincingly exemplified in a lucid and emotional exposition of Rabaud's compact, melodious and imaginatively vigorous score.

One could wish that Rabaud's music were more distinctively Gallic in its spirit and texture and less suggestive of Germany and Brahms, but from some points of view that circumstance may be regarded as a recommendation and as to its merit there can be no difference of well informed and authoritative opinion. In its breadth and vigor and dignity in the spontaneity of its movement, the significance of its contrasts and the emotional intensity of its appeal this E minor symphony of Rabaud's is a veritable masterpiece to be unreservedly applauded and admired. The same programme will be given tonight.