

# MUSIC

By RICHARD ALDRICH.

## Dr. Strauss Accompanies His Own Songs

Apparently the New York public is not so profoundly interested in hearing Dr. Richard Strauss play the piano accompaniments of his songs as to fill the Town Hall more than sparsely. There was a very moderate sized audience yesterday afternoon at the first of a series of recitals his songs by Miss Elizabeth Schumann and Miss Elena Gerhardt, with Dr. Strauss "at the piano."

Nor is there any very obvious reason why it should have been larger. It is one thing for Dr. Strauss to conduct his orchestral works; he is a distinguished and a highly accomplished conductor; and in some of his orchestral works, at least, has conveyed new impressions and given certain new glimpses in them. But he is not a very good piano player and is rather an indifferent accompanist. It might be said that the word "indifferent" could be applied in both meanings. He disclosed no very keen interest in the proceedings and put little flavor or pungency or musical significance into his accompaniments. They were very decently subdued and quite confidently played.

Under the circumstances it seemed to be of minor importance that the songs were sung by Miss Elizabeth Schumann, who had previously sung some of Dr. Strauss's songs in the Metropolitan Opera House with accompaniments arranged by him for orchestra. Her agreeable light soprano voice has somewhat greater value in the smaller hall. It is pleasing in quality, though considerably limited in color and range of expression. She sings with intelligent phrasing and an excellent German enunciation; and presumably interprets Dr. Strauss's songs as Dr. Strauss wishes them sung. It would not be rash, however, to say that many of them have been much better sung here than Miss Schumann sang them, with more spirit, more variety of expression, a deeper reach into their emotional significance; also that they have been more interestingly accompanied.

Two changes in the printed list were made: "Glückes Genug" and "Muttertändelel" were given instead of the first two of the second group on the program.

## The Philharmonic Society.

The concert of the Philharmonic Society last evening began with Beethoven's Eighth Symphony and ended with Tschalkovsky's "Italian Caprice"; but what doubtless fixed the attention of the audience most deeply was the music and the presence of two distinguished living composers, Strauss and Rachmaninoff.

Richard Strauss's "Till Eulenspiegel" came after the symphony. Mr. Stransky gave it a very spirited performance, more brilliant and more exciting in some ways, perhaps, than the one the composer himself recently conducted here; but not so subtly drawn in certain of its details and not so pointed in some of the ironical expression. But it was richly colored and highly lighted and deeply shaded; and justly called out great applause.

And then Dr. Strauss, who was sitting in a box, rose and bowed and came own to the platform and bowed many times again and congratulated the orchestra and Mr. Stransky, and seemed pleased.

Mr. Rachmaninoff played his second piano concerto, which, it seemed, had never been given before at the Philharmonic Society's concerts, though it has been several times played at other concerts in New York. Mr. Rachmaninoff also aroused great enthusiasm; he was greeted with much applause when he came on, and was richly rewarded with more for his performance, which was an exceedingly fine one of an exceedingly fine work.

The concerto seems sombre in spirit: there is a certain sadness in all three of the movements even in the superb sweep and vigor of the last. The plangent, slow movement has some of the most beautiful pages of modern music, based on a theme of a deeply insinuating expressiveness developed at great length, but with a cogency that holds the attention unceasingly. The concerto is one that keeps the pianist almost unceasingly busy, in highly elaborated figuration; but the method is one that gives no hint of monotony. Especially is there none in so superb a performance as that which Mr. Rachmaninoff gave of his music last evening: brilliant without forcing brilliancy to the fore, eloquent in its exposition of the spirit, beautifully chiseled in articulation and in phrasing. The accompaniment by the orchestra was full of warmth and spirit. No wonder the audience was moved to rapturous enthusiasm.

**The New York Times**

Published: December 16, 1921

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