

MUSIC

By OLIN DOWNES.

The New York Symphony.

There is a marked difference, at least in many cases, between the interpretation of a composition by its composer and the interpretation of the same composition by one who is only a virtuoso. This is not always the fact, but it is the fact quite often, and it was the fact when Mr. Rachmaninoff played his third piano concerto with the New York Symphony Orchestra, Walter Damrosch conductor, yesterday afternoon in Carnegie Hall. Almost did Mr. Rachmaninoff persuade us that this was great music. If the third concerto did not rank among his poorest music he would have convinced us to the point of adamancy of its worth. But the concerto as a whole is long-winded and without freshness of invention. The beginning is unusual and promising in its simplicity. The poetical ending of the first movement has a refreshing freedom from the customary virtuoso bombast. And Mr. Rachmaninoff played like the past master of his instrument and the musical giant that he is, with profound feeling, electrical excitement and rhythm, with sensuous melancholy in the treatment of lyrical themes and a passionate achievement of climax. We would far rather hear him play a poor concerto than many other pianists playing good ones. But we would still rather have heard Mr. Rachmaninoff play his own Second concerto or a worth-while concerto of another composer.

The orchestral compositions were a novelty by Louis Aubert, "The Dryad," and Vaughan Williams's "London" symphony, which opened the concert. In former works of Aubert which we have heard he imitated Debussy. These, however, were works of earlier vintage than the one performed yesterday. In the one performed yesterday Aubert is haunted by Stravinsky.

The "London" symphony has been played frequently by Mr. Damrosch, but no one who has fallen under the spell of the music will grudge that. The symphony is deeply impressive of the fact that not theories or esthetics or even high intentions make a composer. Other composers than Vaughan Williams have sought inspiration in London streets and by rivers that flowed at least as beautifully as the Thames. Other aspirants to fame have apostrophized the historic city. At last a composer with genius came along; he felt deep in his heart the eternal tides of life, sweeping by and under existence like the silent flowing river; he knew the unutterable melancholy of poor, deserted streets; the folly of youth and the loneliness of age; the brief, uneasy existence that is the greatest illusion of all, while Big Ben tolls for the passing of all mortal things—and he wrote a noble symphony.

Mengelberg and Franck.

The incomparable symphony of César Franck-Germaine Tailleferre's piano concerto, with the charming young composer at the piano, and the pomp and circumstances of Liszt's "Tasso: Lament and Triumph" made the program of the Philharmonic Society last night in Carnegie Hall. Mr. Mengelberg had played the symphony the evening previous. His broad and dramatic reading of Liszt's music is well known and justly commended. Some think he is not the ideal conductor for Franck-Franck, simple of soul as he was, artless, unassuming, transparently honest and naïve in his dealings with his fellow-man, was nevertheless a mystic, which Mr. Mengelberg rarely is in his readings. What this conductor undoubtedly accomplishes with Franck is the musicianly and authoritative treatment of the music from the standpoint of its broader lines, its full, noble sonorities and dramatic climaxes. That is enough to make the symphony tell—that, and the sentiment with which Mr. Mengelberg causes his orchestra to sing melodies and give phrases warm, communicative feeling. And Franck's symphony is a work that meets many conceptions and seldom fails to reveal its inherent logic and clearness of structure. Moreover, its orchestration, with its sometimes shadowy and sometimes dazzlingly luminous coloring, is itself a source of wonder. The symphony made its customary effect last night, and Mr. Mengelberg shared with the composer the audience's applause.

Miss Tailleferre's concert, in turn, gave the audience much pleasure. The personality of the young composer, as well as her composition, was an asset to her as an artist. She played clearly, brilliantly and with complete confidence and technical control; with an ease and naturalness which made the somewhat infantile character of some measures less artificial and more convincing than at the previous hearing of the music. After this performance Miss Tailleferre was recalled four times. Whether or not her concerto has much permanent value, she had proved one of the evening's major attractions.

Two American Works.

The Neighborhood Playhouse has added to its repertory two new works by Americans: "A Legend of the Dance," described as a "medieval interlude," by Agnes Morgan, with music by Lily Hyland, and "Sooner and Later," a "dance satire," by Irene Lewisohn, with music by Emerson Whithorne. "Sooner and Later" is a satirical conception of three stages of human development, past, present and future. First is a scene of primitive life. At dawn there are calls from the watchers on the hills. The tribe assembles. There is a rite to the sun, and an invocation for fertility. The people depart at the bidding of their Headman to daily tasks. Returning at sundown, they spread before him offerings of their toil. The day's work is over. There is "relaxation" in the form of wild shouts and savage dances, which mount to frenzied excitement as the curtain falls. The modern equivalent of all this is the city on a murky day, a fantastical, "expressionistic" scene of house-tops, steel structures, machinery and puppets whose faces are masks. Their toil consists in soulless rhythmical gyrations to music of intentional monotony and discordance. These puppets cease work at the sound of a whistle, and spend their hours of "relaxation" at a "revue." This revue is a parody of Ziegfeld show girls, "folk-dancers," Spanish dancers and jazz dancers, who perform with a vim and exaggeration worthy of the show and the tune which they satirize. (The show is "Shuffle Along" and the tune is "Harry.") The lookers-on at the revue are themselves seized by the rhythmic vertigo. Exhausted, they nevertheless "jazz"-step their way homeward.

The last scene of the ballet shows an imaginary community of the future. In these figures of shadow and transparency there is nothing real. Humanity has lost its primal passions. Feeding, as also Mood, are measured by scientific apparatus. "Relaxation" is provided by the performance of a "Synthetic Mood or Instrumental, Vocal and Color Prelude," followed by a tabloid "Radio Drama," in which a lurid sex drama, with three murders off-stage, implied by incoherent cries of unvisible interpreters, mildly amuses the sophisticated audience. Three pistol shots, languid laughter and applause, and curtain! Thomas Wilfred's "Clavilux," or color-organ, bathes and adds to the fantastical "futuristic" quality of the scene.

This ballet, performed brilliantly, with imagination and no small degree of technical virtuosity on the part of the interpreters, would have significant individuality if only for its nervous, ironic, contemporaneous spirit. It is satire born of today, whether present, past or future make the subject of the moment. The settings and costumes of Donald Oenslager and, in the first part, of Polaire Weissmann, and the stage management of Grace Duncan Cooper are admirably in accordance with and illuminative of the spirit of the piece. The stage, on the whole, conveys very well, with surprising resource and dexterity, the ideas of the authors. Whether Mr. Whithorne's music would stand by itself, divorced from the spectacle, is a question which need not detain us. He has written music intimately correlated, and descriptive of the pantomime, and his scoring is original and suggestive. The tonal description of the puppets at their ridiculous tasks is an extremely ingenious idea. It has real modernity of idiom and meaning. It could not have been written in another period, or by one unaware of modern cities, noises and atmospheric vibrations—"vibrations" is the word! Mr. Whithorne has written here music of a modern day, music of mechanisms scientific and human, and their "vibra-

tions." He has evoked the sensation of that which is high-pitched and automatic. The music, with its complicated, conflicting and steadily recurrent rhythms, the settings and costumes, worthy of a Tatlin or Picabia, contribute alike to this unique effect—one of the best moments of a hard and witty satire.

Elsewhere the music is of varying degrees of effectiveness. The score of the first scene provides a good imitation of primitive cries and also imitations—probably unconscious but nevertheless inescapable—of Stravinsky. It is not easy to be primitive in music today, as if there had been no such thing as "Sacré du printemps." It is enough that the effect required by the scene is carried out, while the barbaric traditional chants, flung out by the dancers with admirable lack of vocal polish or precaution, have the roughness and wildness required by Miss Lewisohn's scenario.

There are amusing musical quotations in the second act—a take-off of a popular dance tune; the hymn "Onward Christian Soldiers!" chanted raucously and out of pitch by a Salvation Army band supposedly in the streets below, and that heel-tingling tune "Harry" as accompaniment for the amazing, soul-stirring jazz dancing of the four young women who appear with Albert Carroll. Their names should be immortalized, but since the cast of "Sooner and Later" is a very large one and highly efficient individually as well as en masse, few soloists will be mentioned here. The Follies girls descend steps to a chromatic glide out of Stravinsky via Rimsky-Korsakoff. The amusing take-off of a "shimmy" by Marc Loebel and Lily Lubell must be mentioned; and the megaphone puppet of William Beyer; and the taxi puppet of Harold Minger; and the puppet factory workers; and the puppet tailor of George Heller; and the Spanish dancers, Blanche Talmud and Allan Glen—&c., &c! There were numerous capital features of the show by no means confined to the second part. In the first part the men dancers, in particular, performed with a sweep and gusto highly appropriate, and one of the best passages of the music is the combination of the motives of the men and women when action mingles the group on the stage.

The music of the last part of this ballet is at first hearing remarkable principally for its scoring. It is again artificial in intent, but in a manner different from that of the preceding scene, of which the sounds were more stark and powerful. In the final episode Mr. Whithorne has accomplished a curious empty tinkling for the figures, hollow of human feeling. Throughout, he has written fluently in the ultra-modern manner and with a keen sense of stage effect. All in all, a production that reflects much credit upon the creators and interpreters of the piece, and emphasizes the truly remarkable achievements of the Neighborhood Playhouse in its cultivation of the dance and the art of the modern ballet.

An excellent foil to the modernism of "Sooner and Later" is supplied by the smaller and less pretentious work which precedes it, "The Legend of the Dance," in which a noble host and hostess entertain guests with jesting and tumbling and, finally, with the performance by a company of strolling players of the naïve "Legend of the Dance." This portrays the ascent of the dancer, Musa, to Heaven, and the entertainment on a feast day in Heaven of the Nine Muses, specifically invited up for the occasion from their abode in a nether region. Anne Schmidt's Musa was only one of her accomplishments of the evening. King David was Albert Carroll, and Mr. Loebel recited the legend. For this spectacle Miss Hyland has provided pleasant music in the style of dances, folk music and church chants of the "moyen-age." The performances of a small picked orchestra of excellent musicians make distinctive features of both the production.

[This article, on account of conflicting musical dates, has been written from the dress rehearsal.]

NORDICA MEMORIAL PLANS.

Eva Gauthier to Head Committee for Stony Point Dormitory.

Friends of the late Lillian Nordica have formed a committee, of which Eva Gauthier has accepted the Chairmanship, for the Nordica Memorial Building planned as a part of the American Operatic and Allied Art Foundation at Stony Point-on-the-Hudson. Designs for the new building, a dormitory for women students, have been adopted, and the work on it is soon to start.

Nordica's opera associate, Mme. Schumann-Heink, will serve on the committee with Mme. Gauthier and other musical woman, among whom are Hulda Lashanska, Marguerite d'Alvarez, Ethel Cave Cole, Sophie Braslau, Baroness von Klenner, Kathleen Howard, Mme. Schoen Rene and Cobina Wright.

Also on the committee are Miss Alice DeLamar, Mrs. R. T. Wilson, Mrs. J. DeW. Pentz, Mrs. John F. Lyons, Mrs. Philip Bentz, Mrs. W. T. Carrington, Mrs. J. W. Garrett, Mrs. H. Stefansson, Mrs. Simon Frankel, Mrs. Frank Sieberling, Mrs. Stephen Pell and many more.

The Board of Directors consists of Richard Hammond, Louis Wiley, George P. Raymond, Deems Taylor, Walter K. Varney, William Sullivan and George Gershwin.

GIRL, 12, GIVES A RECITAL.

Helen Fogel, Pianist, Makes a Good Impression at Aeolian Hall.

Helen Fogel, a 12-year-old pianist, gave a second recital at Aeolian Hall last evening, making a good impression.

She has much technical facility and a good memory. Her Bach could not be considered too seriously, but she did very well indeed in a Beethoven sonata, her phrasing, timing and general grasp being much firmer. In fact the three last movements deserved the warm applause they received. She was further heard in Chopin, Schumann and Debussy and closed a successful evening with Mendelssohn's "Rondo Capriccioso."

Harold Gleason in Recital.

Harold Gleason, head organist of the Eastman School of Music in Rochester, and private organist to Mr. Eastman himself, gave his first New York recital yesterday afternoon at the John Wanamaker auditorium. Mr. Gleason made a preliminary choice of program. After a perfunctory obeisance to the Latin organ musicians—Andrea Gabrieli, Girolamo Frescobaldi, Padre Martini—he undertook a thoroughgoing interpretation of his countrymen. A composition by Edward Shippen Barnes entitled "Toccata on a Gregorian Theme" was well appreciated. Edwin Lamare, R. S. Stoughton, Mark Andrews, Arthur Bird and Selim Palmgren also figured on Mr. Gleason's program. Cesar Frank's familiar "Piece Heroique" and two numbers by Joseph Bonnet, the organist of St. Eustache, Paris, completed the matinee.

Barthelmess in a Hospital.

Richard Barthelmess, screen star, arrived yesterday from Guantanamo, Cuba, on the United States battleship New York. He made the trip as the guest of the navy in preparation of his appearance as a job in the screen production "Shore Leave." Mr. Barthelmess went from the battleship direct to Polyclinic Hospital for treatment for abscess trouble. His condition was not serious, it was said, but in view of the early filming of his new production, scheduled to start April 13, it was thought best that he undergo immediate treatment.

Columbia Glee Club Concert.

The third annual concert of the Columbia University Glee Club, assisted by Nora Fauchald, formerly a soprano with Sousa's band, was held last night at Town Hall. The concert opened with the university's "Alma Mater," which was followed by several selections by Bach, Grieg and other famous masters. An organ and piano accompanied the club in its ensemble numbers. The finale was struck when the club sang a series of American college songs.

Maude to Resume in 'Aren't We All'

Cyril Maude, it is announced, will begin a return engagement in "Aren't We All?" at the Globe Theatre on Monday night, April 13. Mr. Maude was at the height of his success here in the play when he was called abroad by the illness of his wife.

W. C. Fields Back in "Follies" Cast.

W. C. Fields, after an illness of several days, returned last night of cast of the Ziegfeld "Follies" at the New Amsterdam Theatre.