

# MUSIC IN REVIEW

## 16,000 Hear Kreisler and Rachmaninoff at the Final Concert in the Musicians' Fund Series.

By OLIN DOWNES.

The fifth and last of the extraordinary series of concerts that Walter Damrosch has arranged and conducted for the benefit of the Musicians' Emergency Fund took place last night in Madison Square Garden, with Dr. Damrosch conducting and with Fritz Kreisler and Sergei Rachmaninoff as soloists.

Needless to say, such an imposing array of artists attracted an immense audience, the largest of the whole series. This audience, estimated at from 16,000 to 17,000, was an imposing sight, filling the entire floor and packing the galleries, rising on each side and at the back of the hall nearly to the roof. Gatherings such as these have only been assembled in the past for prize fights and other sporting events. It remained for Paderewski last season and Dr. Damrosch this one to equal their proportions, if not their gate receipts, by dint of musical fame and prowess.

The concert last night was not only the best attended but certainly one of the most brilliant of Dr. Damrosch's series. The orchestral compositions were Weber's "Oberon" overture and Liszt's Fourteenth Rhapsody, and they set a festive key for the occasion. After Weber's music Mr. Kreisler interpreted the Beethoven concerto, with the eloquence and the deep fervor which never degenerates into what is sentimental or theatrical, which draws the line so clearly between what is nobly eloquent and in the best of taste, and that which is in the slightest degree superficial or unworthy of the music. And Mr. Kreisler played last night with as fine proportions and as intimate a beauty as if he had been performing in the Town Hall.

There is no need now to dwell upon the superlative features of his Beethoven concerto, as exalted in spirit as it is significant of detail. Above all there is in its interpretation the indefinable quality of Mr. Kreisler's musical personality, to which the public responds with an intuition that is better than reason.

Mr. Kreisler received what may justly be termed an ovation. Mr. Rachmaninoff was to meet the same fate. He made a happy choice of his concerto for this con-

cert. It was his own second piano concerto in C minor, a work which will probably surpass all other of Rachmaninoff's composition for piano and orchestra in its popularity.

There is good reason for this. The concerto belongs to the Rubinstein-Tchaikovsky style of work. It is a display piece of which the appeal rests more upon sheerly musical interest than mere technical achievement by the player. The frame is grand, the style commanding, the themes Slavic in curve and emotional quality. All of it has a fine breadth and lyricism and at times a fine Russian gloom. Each movement, concerto fashion, interests and stirs the audience, provided always that a pianist of sufficient fire, authority and bravura discourses the music.

Mr. Rachmaninoff played with electrical virtuosity and, when he wanted it, a sheer magnificence of tone that dominated the orchestra and the audience alike. It was a concerto and a performance for a great gathering in an immense place. There was at the same time the sincerity and the sentiment that always pertain to Rachmaninoff the composer and the performer. Figuratively speaking, he turned his piano and his audience upside down, and he had an unconditional triumph, the audience applauding and recalling him for minutes after he had finished playing.

The gratifying announcement has been made that these concerts, given at such low prices of admission that they have created new audiences for good music, have brought in a total sum for the Musicians' Emergency Fund of \$30,000. A note in the program stated that "while our object was principally to make money for our charity, an interesting by-product has been that \* \* \* over 23,000 people have purchased the cheaper priced seats for the first four concerts. \* \* \* For next season the Musician's Emergency Fund will create an associate membership for which the annual dues will be \$10. All music lovers who believe in the work which we are doing to alleviate the prevailing distress among so many of the musicians of New York are invited to join."