

**RACHMANINOFF WINS  
ORCHESTRA ACCLAIM**

Triumphs as Pianist and  
Composer; 'Bells' Given  
With Chorus, Soloists

**PROGRAM**  
Rachmaninoff, Symphony, "The Bells"  
Alvyn Davis, soprano; Fritz Krueger,  
tenor; Elwood Hawkins, baritone; and  
the University of Pennsylvania Choral  
Society; Hart McDonald, director.  
Rachmaninoff, Second Piano Concerto  
Sergei Rachmaninoff, pianist

By LINTON MARTIN

IT WAS Sergei Rachmaninoff's day at the Philadelphia Orchestra concert in the Academy yesterday.

That is a simple statement in itself. But by implication it is packed with superlatives. For the celebrated Slav, who may truly take title as the last living link with the great, romantic musical Russia of the imperial past, invested the afternoon with glory and grandeur in the dual capacity of composer and pianist, to the ecstatic enchantment of an audience that crowded the Academy to capacity.

Everybody concerned with the occasion took fire from some unmistakable spark of inspiration. That included a quite considerable company, too. For although the program was wisely limited to just two soundly selected numbers, Rachmaninoff's magnificent performance of his own most impressive and popular piano concerto, the Second, in C minor, was preceded by a stirring presentation of his choral symphony, "The Bells." And this was given with benefit of soprano, tenor and baritone soloists, and the University of Pennsylvania Choral Society, to say nothing of the Orchestra's instrumental opulence, responding superbly to the finest conducting Eugene Ormandy has thus far done here.

**Superb in Own Second Concerto**

In recent seasons, Rachmaninoff's Second Piano Concerto has been played at Philadelphia Orchestra concerts only by a couple of estimable and able girl pianists. It is sixteen years since the composer previously played it here himself. His performance yesterday was a fresh revelation and reminder of its romantic richness, its poetry and power, its soaring spaciousness of style, its luminous, mane-tossing might. For Rachmaninoff, the pianist of 64 years, flamed afresh from the inspiration of Rachmaninoff, the composer of 28 years. It proved a perfect combination of the mature interpreter of today meeting himself as the oncoming composer of 36 years ago.

Rachmaninoff has already unequivocally called the Philadelphia Orchestra the greatest in the world. Yesterday he had ample reason to renew that artistic confession of faith for the superb support given him by Mr. Ormandy and the Orchestra. By the time the audience reluctantly let him go, with the soloist looking as preternatural and melancholy as ever, even some calloused hands must have been blistered from the applause.

**Choral Work Impressively Given**

It is nearly 17 years since "The Bells" Symphony was given its American premiere—of course at Philadelphia Orchestra concerts under the direction of Leopold Stokowski. At that time it was called Rachmaninoff's Third Symphony. Earlier this season, Stokowski again gave us the premiere of a Third Symphony by Rachmaninoff, which turned out to be at least two other Chinamen and four Hawaiians as between two Third Symphonies by the same composer; this reviewer unhesitatingly goes bell-ringing for "The Bells," especially as given yesterday.

Since superlatives were threatened at the beginning of this review, they may be liberally unleashed again for the participation yesterday of sundry and all—Mr. Ormandy for his dynamic direction, the vocal opulence and sensitive response of the University of Pennsylvania Choral Society as trained to the pinnacle of perfection by Dr. Hart McDonald, and the several soloists: Alvyn Davis, soprano; Fritz Krueger, tenor; and Elwood Hawkins, baritone.

It may be suspected by this time that the current concert is An Event of the symphonic season. It is. And in big red "caps."