

# Rachmaninoff Hailed As Orchestra Soloist

Pianist Plays Own Composition;  
Ormandy Returns to Podium

**RACHMANINOFF PROGRAM**  
Second Symphony ———— In E minor  
Third Piano Concerto ——— In D minor  
Sergei Rachmaninoff, soloist

By LINTON MARTIN

Sergei Rachmaninoff was doubly the hero of the Philadelphia Orchestra concert in the Academy yesterday.

The great, gaunt, 66-year-old Russian pianist and composer appeared in both those roles before an almost capacity audience that gave him a prolonged ovation, the occasion also marking the return to the podium, after four eventful weeks, of Eugene Ormandy, who also was hailed with prolonged applause, and brought a return to the normal, or pre-Stokowski, seating arrangement of the musicians.

It was wholly Rachmaninoff's day so far as the program was concerned. For the two major numbers which comprised it were his Second Symphony, in E minor, and his Third Piano Concerto, in D minor, in which the composer himself was of course the soloist.

#### SOLOIST DOMINATES

While the Third Concerto is hardly the equal of the Second in soaring inspiration and impassioned expression, it was truly transfigured with the glow of greatness in Rachmaninoff's superb performance on this occasion. Thoroughly Russian in its rhythms, color and feeling, it was played with masterly technique, but a technique that was always subordinated to the poetry and power of its musical content.

With its whirlwind cadenzas, and the unceasing predominance of the solo instrument, this Third Concerto makes terrific demands upon the pianist, and the composer yesterday rode his own mettlesome musical steed in a fashion that held his audience spellbound. Because of the heavy orchestration that supports and accompanies the solo part, this

work is no plaything for the school-girl pride of the conservatory, but masterful, masculine music demanding fingers of steel, intellectual austerity, and musicianship of mellowed breadth and maturity.

These were abundantly the qualities with which Rachmaninoff invested it yesterday, and he received excellent support in the accompaniment by Mr. Ormandy and the orchestra.

#### PLAY SECOND SYMPHONY

The Second Symphony, a product of the peak years of Rachmaninoff's creative qualities as a composer, is so utterly individual in ideas and expression, so luxuriant in musical material, thematically and in treatment, that it seems astonishing it is heard so seldom. It is, in fact, seven years since it last appeared on a Philadelphia Orchestra program, and its performance yesterday under Mr. Ormandy's baton again disclosed what dynamic vitality it possesses.

Here, again, is music unmistakably Russian in color and content, and not Russian in the modern manner, but steeped thoroughly in the grand classic tradition. That surge and sweep of line, that quality of poetic lyricism and gently brooding melancholy contrasted against impetuous fire, and the prevailingly sombre hues, are essentially Russian, and essentially Rachmaninoff.

It was played with great verve, and there was opportunity for the lustrous string tone of the orchestra. But the woodwinds and brasses certainly have lost some of the focus of tone and clarity apparent in the seating arrangement introduced by Stokowski during the past three weeks, especially when heard with the strings, and the same thing was true of the basses. But the performance, and the presence of Rachmaninoff, made the concert a consequential occasion.