

'RHAPSODY' PLAYED BY PHILHARMONIC

Rachmaninoff Soloist for His
Own Compositions in Concert
at Carnegie Hall

WORK BRINGS AN OVATION

Dimitri Mitropoulos Directs
Orchestra for First Time
During the Season

By NOEL STRAUS

At the concert given by the Philharmonic-Symphony Orchestra last night in Carnegie Hall, Dimitri Mitropoulos was the conductor and Sergei Rachmaninoff the soloist. Mr. Mitropoulos, who made his initial appearance of the season with the organization at this event, had prepared a program in which Mr. Rachmaninoff officiated at the

keyboard in his own "Rhapsody on a Theme of Paganini," and was further represented as composer by his three "Symphonic Dances," Op. 45, which received their first performance at these concerts. The program also contained Berlioz's overture to "King Lear" and Bach's organ prelude and fugue in B minor in Mr. Mitropoulos's arrangement.

Protracted Applause

Mr. Mitropoulos and Mr. Rachmaninoff were both in top form in the "Rhapsody," which was projected with such extraordinary virtuosity that it was followed by an exceptionally protracted ovation. The pianist played his impressive display piece as only he can play it, bringing out a wealth of imaginative color effects and vivid contrasts employed with cumulative effect as the whole neared its climax, while Mr. Mitropoulos supplied an orchestral support kaleidoscopic in its varied tinting and fully worthy of the soloist's magnificent unfoldment of the solo part. There was one point at which things went askew for a few measures because of a momentary slip of memory on the pianist's

part, but it was of no moment in a breathtaking exhibition of skill and artistry.

Mr. Rachmaninoff's "Symphonic Dances for Orchestra" had been heard here previously from the Philadelphia Orchestra last season. Though based on dance rhythms, they have the nature of tone poems. Masterly in their scoring, they are filled with mood and meaning and reflect the influence of modernist dissonance in their harmonic structure. The first dance with a marchlike chief theme and a melancholy pastoral-like central episode was decidedly impressive. In the second of the dances, a lengthy, brooding waltz, there is a distracting resemblance to one of the themes from Strauss's "Salome" in the melodic structure, but the movement as a whole nevertheless has a quality all of its own, being definitely Russian in its evocation of a forlorn and distraught atmosphere.

"King Lear" Played

The Berlioz "King Lear" overture, strangely neglected by conductors, though not clearly related to the Shakespearian tragedy is obviously programmatic in its intentions. Though written after the revolutionary "Fantastic" sym-

phony, it is traditional in its methods and material, but makes remarkable use of them. Mr. Mitropoulos read it con amore with great dramatic stress, but the second theme of the chief division when it is first announced by the oboe was singularly lacking in meaning.

The less said the better about Mr. Mitropoulos's vain attempt to orchestrate successfully the prelude and fugue in B minor of Bach, a work absolutely impossible to transcribe, because only on the organ is its essential character revealed. Although its powerful sonorities might suggest the orchestra in volume, everything in the composition, one of Bach's greatest achievements for the instrument for which it was written, happens to be a matter of line, not of color, and in putting the emphasis on the latter element Mr. Mitropoulos completely distorted its content.