

MUSIC OF THE DAY

New Music by Rachmaninoff

By EDWARD CUSHING

CONCERT by the Philadelphia Orchestra, Leopold Stokowski, conducting, Sergel Rachmaninoff, pianist, assisting artist. Program: Rachmaninoff, Fourth Piano (first time in New York); Rachmaninoff, Russian Songs for Chorus and Orchestra (first time in New York); Tschalkowsky, "Romeo and Juliet." At Carnegie Hall, last evening.

THOUGH born into this impatient and turbulent world as recently as 1873 (Richard Strauss was then a boy of 9 and Wagner was within 10 years of his death), Sergel Rachmaninoff remains entangled in the convulsions and the sentiments of the last century. Only slightly the senior of his obstreperous countryman Igor Strawinsky, he has escaped utterly the contamination of the times. The vistas afforded by his music are never sharp-edged or sinister. He has made no effort to purge his temperament of disestablished and despised romanticism; his is still the power of reflection, the gift of meditation. Mr. Rachmaninoff will not see the world as many of his generation see it; he voices no vicious praise of our mechanistic manias. The telegraphic realism of today is scornfully rejected by his muse, whose utterance is invariably couched in resonant and soaring periods. A sunset melancholy, an autumnal passion illumine his pages, of which Tschalkowsky's brooding shade, must certainly approve.

NOT a prolific composer is Mr. Rachmaninoff. His major works include a pair of symphonies, a choral setting of Poe's "The Bells," three operas, some well-known piano music, together with the quartet of concerti for that instrument, the most recent of which (completed in the summer of 1926) was revealed for the first time in New York at the concert of the Philadelphia Orchestra in Carnegie Hall last evening. It does not differ in style from Mr. Rachmaninoff's other essays in the same form. Through the opening Allegro vivace and the succeeding Largo the tone-poet rhapsodized upon the theme of resignation. Sorrow is the burden of this music's measure—not high-pitched, destructive grief, but rather a somber and a lethargic distress of heart. The finale (again an Allegro vivace) is more hopeful, though a note of desperation is not lacking. The concerto is written in the tonality of G minor.

MR. RACHMANINOFF has written more arresting and convincing music than is contained in this novelty. The position of his Second Concerto—that in C minor—as the favorite among his works remains unquestioned. It will appeal to the pianist as more grateful to his instrument, and it will appeal to the public as more spontaneously and generously lyrical. The music

of the Fourth Concerto had faded before it was imagined; it says nothing new, nothing pertinent to the day in which we live. Nor does it compass its plattitudes, its senilities, gracefully. It is dull and commonplace, weak and without conviction. Mr. Rachmaninoff played it superbly, and Mr. Stokowski's accompaniment was all that could be desired.

ANOTHER recent composition of this eminent Russian artist and virtuoso was the choral and orchestral setting of three Russian folk songs: "The Drake and the Duck" (male chorus); "Oh, My Johnny!" (female chorus), and "Powder and Paint" (mixed chorus). Here again were shown the salient characteristics of Mr. Rachmaninoff's style; a close, contained melodic pattern, somberly and opaquely instrumentated. The orchestral portion of the score was ably disposed of under Mr. Stokowski's direction. The singers, trained by Kurt Schindler, and singing in Russian, were less successful in coping with the difficult task assigned them. The concert was brought to its conclusion with the "Romeo and Juliet" fantasy of Tschalkowsky.

FEODOR CHALIAPIN returned to the ranks of the opera company in a benefit performance of "Faust" given last evening. Menacing the Sibel of Miss Dalossy, impertinent and malign, his Mephistopheles was, as always, superb. The incumbent of the title role was Mr. Tokatyan. Mary Lewis sang Marguerite and Miss Howard was a persuasive Marthe. Others in the cast were Giuseppe De Luca (Valentin) and James Wilfe. Mr. Hasselmanns conducted.

The Undying Fire

The Cantonese on Shanghai sweep today;
Not bearing torches with a purpose dire,
But forward urged by that Undying Fire
Of liberty that holds all foes at bay;
Chiang Kai-Shek his laurels free would lay
Before a Prophet's tomb; and but aspire
To do what Dr. Sun would most admire
And shun what Sun would think a shameless way.
"United China, freed from alien hands"
A Mascot slogan from the start has been;
Not all unheard in the most distant lands;
And northward rolling cheered by China's men,
While war-lord masters of the brigand bands
Fear most the moving soul of Sun Yat Sen. J. A.