

BOSTON SYMPHONY HERE

A Crowded House Welcomed the Band and Rachmaninoff.

It is indeed good news for Brooklyn that the Boston Symphony Orchestra has returned with every seat for the season at the Academy sold and last night with a large fringe of auditors standing. All the wounds caused by Doktor Muck and his Germanism have been healed, including those in the orchestra caused by the expulsion of a considerable number of German aliens. The first movement of the Schumann Symphony last night disclosed the balance and purity so long associated with this band and the audience settled for an evening of pure enjoyment.

The chief interest, however, centered not in the orchestra nor in its conductor, Pierre Monteux, who received merely a polite greeting on his entrance and a cordial recall after the Schumann, a tribute in which he insisted that the band should share. The hero of the night was Rachmaninoff, the pianist. The audience showed that they wanted him when he came on and wanted him still more badly when he went off. There must have been at least a dozen recalls. The old first Concerto of Liszt has been played to death, but under Rachmaninoff's fingers, or rather under his mighty spirit, it suggested a paraphrase of Lady Macbeth's comment on the murdered Duncan: "Who would have thought the old thing had so much blood in it!" Blood and fire were the qualities that marked the great Russian's performance. In the long procession of pianists who have used the Concerto there have been some who coaxed a more perfect singing tone and perhaps more clearness in some of the rapid passages, though nobody achieved greater delicacy in the soft passage with the strings. But nobody has poured himself through the composition with such compelling eloquence as Rachmaninoff. The Concerto last night did not sound like a trick piece for the piano but like a bit of musical inspiration, which shows how effectively Rachmaninoff reinforced Liszt. The accompaniment was a special credit to Monteux and his men.

Schumann denominated his B-flat Symphony "Spring." Its composition is of the springtide in its composer's life, the early days of his marriage to Clara Wieck. Certainly it is bright, joyous, blithe, with the freshest of youthful fancy. Last evening, however, it was rude and rough under the heavy hand of Mr. Monteux. The fault always in such a performance of the particular work is of two sources, a positive murkiness of orchestration on the composer's part and a negative failure on the conductor's part to clear up the fog of the composer's primitive orchestrating. Mr. Monteux took his Schumann straight. Considering the difference between the orchestra of Schumann's day and that of the present, even the most precise Schumannite can offer no logical objection to what he might consider "tampering."

The Enesco Suite is not unfamiliar. It has merit and individuality both of thematic thought and of orchestral color and variety. The composer, however, is still a young man; as composers go, a very young man; and it is too easy to make an oracle of him. The suite is not a composition to excite any undue concern among the members of either the right or left wing of a musical parliament.

The Boston Symphony still possesses many of its ancient qualities. In personnel it undoubtedly fills the first place among such orchestras as are heard in New York. The strings, at least in potentiality, are finer even than those that played under the late unlamented Doktor Muck and during the past two years there has been a notable betterment of the second violin section. Certainly the wood and brass choirs are incomparable. But Mr. Monteux does not insist upon the finer and most ingratiating qualities of orchestral playing; the story comes from Boston that he is far from the inexorable taskmaster his predecessors were.

In fact, Mr. Monteux is not a conductor of the first rank. That is no recent discovery. He is an excellent musician, a fine gentleman, and an indifferent conductor. And until a new evangel comes, the unique position of the Boston orchestra will be a thing of the past. Today its playing does not fill the ancient requirement of being everything that is excellent.

Aeolian Hall heard Harold Henry, pianist, in the afternoon and Maurice Dambois, 'cellist, in the evening. Mr. Henry spends most of his time in and around Chicago. He is an earnest young man with brains and a capable