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MUSIC EVENTS

Boston Symphony Orchestra Heard in First Concert Here

Sergei Rachmaninoff, the Russian pianist-composer, seemed to have been the main attraction for the large audience last night at the first concert of the Boston Symphony Orchestra in the Academy of Music. M. Rachmaninoff's reception was tremendous and the applause after his performance in the Liszt Concerto in E Flat Major, Opus No. 1, for pianoforte and orchestra, did not cease until the pianist had taken ten "bows" and hastily retreated to stage box.

The orchestra's new conductor, Pierre Monteux, was accepted last night somewhat as a pleasant matter-of-fact. His appearance was greeted with applause, but he was not awaited, apparently, as expectantly as was Rachmaninoff. After a fashion, M. Monteux justified this reception. His conducting is unpretentious and free from mannerisms. One very noticeable feature of his performance was the excellent control he maintained over his brasses, an element of danger i n the final Boston Symphony concert of the 1918-1919 season last March.

Although the Liszt concerts was the number about which the greater interest centred, the Beethoven Ballet, "Creatures of Prometheus," Opus 13, was the most pleasant rendition of the evening. The music has character, the orchestra was perfectly disciplined and the five soloists approximated virtuosity. A. Holy was the harpist, who did much to make the lofty adagio memorable and J. Bedetti played the violincello wtih technique and sensibility. The other three soloists were G. Laurent, flute; A. Sand, clarinet, and A. Laus, bassoon.

The chief element of pleasure in the Liszt concerto was of course the interpretation of M. Rachmaninoff. The orchestra handled the concerto, but the audience seemed to have ears only for the pianist. M. Rachmaninoff's playing at first strikes one as labored, but this is obviously due to his manner of attacking the instrument. The Russian is an absolute master of the piano, but his position while playing is redolent of an extreme conscientiousness which gives an impression of formality, until the clarity of his tone is fully appreciated. The Liszt concerto, perhaps, did not provide M. Rachmaninoff with the best medium of expression, for it certainly is not the best of "l'Abbe's" compositions. But with most of the pianoforte score keyed up in treble, the concerto is full of runs that require a sensitive touch and careful fingering.

The Schumann Symphony in B flat major, No. 1, Opus 38, which opened the program, is indebted for its enthusiastic reception much more to the musicians than to the composer. Schumann wrote very beautiful songs, but this composition cannot be included in the list of his best works. It has beauty of tone and poetry of conception but in the hands of less skilled artists would not have elicited the approbation it gained last night.

Enesco's Suite for Orchestra, Opus 9, brought the evening to a close. It is a handsome affair in four movements, alternately poignant and tempestuous, and one well-calculated to demonstrate the sensibility of a conductor of refinement and polish.

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