

# D. C. Symphony Triumphs With Initial Concert

**Serge Rachmaninoff  
Is Guest Artist;  
Kindler Acclaimed**

By **GLENN DILLARD GUNN**

To celebrate the opening of the National Symphony's tenth season the audience that gathered in Constitution Hall filled its ample spaces with applause that testified to the regard in which the orchestra and its conductor, Hans Kindler, are held, and to the excitements and satisfactions stimulated by the performance.

It was a brilliant audience, sartorially and socially, and those aspects are important. But from dow-

agers and diplomats in the boxes to plain folk in the galleries, the gathering united in its tribute to the conductor, the members of the orchestra, and the distinguished guest of the evening, Serge Rachmaninoff.

## Well-Balanced Program

Dr. Kindler chose a program youthful in spirit to celebrate this anniversary. A modern American work opened it. Some popular eighteenth-century music, now grown classic, followed. Then came a famous concerto for piano-forte and orchestra which Rachmaninoff composed before he was 30, and a symphony which Tschai-kowsky wrote when he was but little older.

Only the American Festival overture by William Schumann offered problems for the listener. It reflects the troubled present. It is turbulent, raucous, witty, or derisive, by turns, but always expert. It sets up a conflict of tonalities that are as irreconcilable as the recent political arguments, included a sardonic fugato that discovered unexpected paths for its wry melody, but remained zestful and eager to its sonorous climax.

In contrast, the art born of the Eighteenth Century's settled social order, represented nothing loftier than a successful composer's desire to please his noble patrons. If Corelli contrived to expand the technical resources of the stringed instruments while sat-

isfying a generation preoccupied with elegance of expression, that service was incidental, just as the melodic nobility of the slow movement in this suite of dances resulted as much from the observance of wise musical conventions as from deep feeling.

If the livelier dances, which last night's audience found as charming as did the aristocratic Romans who first applauded them, proved anything it is that to be new is not necessarily to be better, as a contrast between a Corelli gigue and a Benny Goodman fragment of boogie-woogie might suggest.

Rachmaninoff also wrote his second concerto at what was to be the end of a settled period. At 28 he was a romanticist, and at 67 he is a romanticist still, savoring the sentiment and the bravura of this work with the same evidences of conviction that he manifested when he first played the concerto for us early in this century. The dreams of youth were no more vivid to him than are the memories of age. Certainly he did not play the work so well when first he visited us as he did last night, nor did he provoke anything resembling the enthusiasm manifested last night.

## Many Curtain Calls

He was many times recalled, but contented himself with bringing the conductor forward to share the applause and with including the orchestra in his acknowledgements. The encore for which the public obviously hoped was denied them.

Tschaikowsky's third symphony proved surprisingly grateful. It has been so long neglected that Washington music lovers knew it not at all. Yet it must have pleased the generation for which it was written, even if the critics did not like it. Its patterns are clear, its melodies, many of them, have the vitality of their folk-song origin. It is well set for the instruments. The scherzo is a Mendelssohnian *moto perpetuo*, but good enough to have been echoed by Rimsky-Korsakow in his tribute to the bumble bee, and the finale is a gorgeous display piece.

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