

Rachmaninoff, Symphony Give 'Surpassing' Concert

Dr. Reiner's Masterly Handling, Orchestra's Response
Add Laurel to Artistic Exploits

By RALPH LEWANDO
Press Music Critic

A concert of treasurable memory played last night in Syria Mosque enlisted the artistic services of the Pittsburgh Symphony Society, Dr. Fritz Reiner, conductor, and Serge Rachmaninoff, piano soloist.

From the opening horn notes of von Weber's "Oberon" overture, through the First Symphony of Robert Schumann and culminating with Rachmaninoff's concerto for piano and orchestra, an eager audience that filled the auditorium listened in rapt attention to surpassing performance and at its conclusion broke into frenzied applause.

Dr. Reiner's masterly handling of the orchestra and the magnificent response of the players added another laurel of achievement to their artistic exploits, which in the final analysis constitute the most potent propaganda for the cause of any worthy symphonic unit striving to survive.



Mr. Lewando

Appeals to Everyone

Weber's overture is so well known that most symphony-philes know practically every note of the work. Yet for all its repetition in concerts the music of its score is inspirational, logical and carries appeal to everyone. Dr. Reiner led its performance with characteristic grace and finesse.

The Schumann First Symphony, which by no means is strange to audiences here, is typical in mood of Schumann in gayest moments. The score is not over-involved, yet there is vigor in the first and last movements, a certain brightness that is always attractive even to the uninitiated, especially in the lovely largetto, a sprightliness of line in the lively third section.

Through the entire work there flows a romantic fervor that lends style that could be only Schumann.

His individuality is indelibly stamped on every bar of this symphony which in many spots is, in character, more pianistic than symphonic.

Yet the music falls pleasantly on the ear. Every vestige of the score was brought forth impressively by the conductor, whose interpretative concept of this symphony, is in the opinion of this reviewer, second to none.

One cannot but be proud to live in an age that gives us a Rachmaninoff. For this wonderful man looms large on the world music scene as a creative genius and exemplary executant.

'Gives Way to Smiles'

His tall gaunt frame is accentuated by a seeming immobility of expression. But this impassivity of facial appearance is absent in private life. Among his family and bosom friends the stern countenance gives way to warming smiles, and serious quietness to keen humor and friendliness.

When Mr. Rachmaninoff sauntered quietly onto the stage last night, he was, as always, a commanding figure. To many, he was awe-inspiring.

The audience accorded him an ovation, and a marked tribute paid him by the orchestra players who stood up as he came across the stage.

Gravely acknowledging these spontaneous gestures, Mr. Rachmaninoff sat down at the piano, signaled Dr. Reiner to begin, and after two bars of orchestral introduction launched forth in the playing of the solo part of his own third concerto, one of the most significant works of its kind in the repertory.

Has Incomparable Skill

Throughout the three movements of this virile work Mr. Rachmaninoff in unostentatious manner, but with incomparable skill, virtuosity and depth of emotion, played his way into the hearts of the hushed listeners giving poetic articulation to a composition that is part of his very being. That the spirit of his playing was communicated to the conductor and players was evidenced by their notable collaboration.

At the conclusion of the concerto, hectic demonstrations of hand-clapping broke the long silence. No one seemed inclined to leave the hall. Mr. Rachmaninoff, thanked Dr. Reiner and the musicians, and left the stage. It was only after four recalls were acknowledged that the audience began leaving the hall.

Mr. Rachmaninoff, Dr. Reiner and the orchestra will repeat the program tomorrow at 3 p. m. at the Mosque.

Organ Recitals

Dr. Marshall Bidwell will play free organ recitals in Carnegie Music Hall tonight at 8:15 o'clock and tomorrow at 4 p. m.

Tonight's program:

- Concert Prelude and Fugue in G Major... Faulkes
- Andante Cantabile from the First Sonata... Philip James
- Adagio ma non troppo from "Symphonie Periodique" Op. 3, No. 1... Pleyel
- Gigue-Rondo... John, Chr. Fr. Bach
- Variations on a Theme by Handel... Karl-Eleri
- (a) La Cathedrale Engloutie... Debussy
- (b) Romance... Rachmaninoff
- Serenade... Rachmaninoff
- (a) Caprice Viennois... Kreisler
- (b) The Old Refrain... Kreisler
- Carillon de Westminster... Vierne

The program for tomorrow follows:

- Prelude to "Lohengrin"... Wagner
- Overture to "The Barber of Seville"... Rossini
- Les Heures Bourgeoises... Jacob
- 1. Sunrise 2. Grape Gathering 3. The Song of the Shepherd 4. Returnings from the Vineyard
- Chorale and Fugue from the Fifth Sonata... Guilman
- The Bells of St. Anne de Beaupre... Russell
- Dedication from the Suite "Through the Looking Glass"... Deems Taylor
- Oriental... Foster
- Fantasy on Foster Melodies... Schubert
- Rakoczy March... Berlioz

Dr. Caspar P. Koch will give a free organ recital tomorrow at 3 p. m. in North Side Carnegie Hall. The Orpheus Trio, with Lyman Almy Perkins at the piano, will participate.

The program:

- Prelude... Dethier
- Serenade... Foster-Koch
- Toccata... d'Everly
- Orpheus Trio... d'Everly
- (a) On Wings of Song... Mendelssohn
- (b) In the Boat... Grieg
- (c) Ave Maria... Schubert
- Persian Suite... Stoughton
- Orpheus Trio... Stoughton
- (a) May Night... Brahms
- (b) Lotus Flower... Schumann
- (c) Impatience... Schubert
- Variations on Foster's "Swanee River"... Flagler