

# 3800 Hail Rachmaninoff Playing New Concerto

By HELEN BUCHALTER

The first Philadelphia Orchestra concert in Constitution Hall, usually a dressy and very social event, became a tribute to a great and romantic figure in music last night as 3800 persons acclaimed the tired and aristocratic figure of Sergei Rachmaninoff.

The austere bearing of the 78-year-old Russian has not been a deterrent to the popular imagination which is fed today on musical showmanship of 57 varieties. At the conclusion of this concert, devoted entirely to his own compositions and with himself as soloist, he was recalled again and again by applause. Tall, lean, unsmiling he leaned on the nine-foot grand, bowed like a prince and disappeared almost like a wraith behind the cellos. In the old days such applause would have been a cue for the piano preludes. Today Rachmaninoff has gone beyond his own war horses.

## TWO WORLDS

In the two works heard on this program—the Second Symphony of 30 years ago and the Fourth Concerto completed in its final draft only this summer—could be heard the symbols of the two worlds in which he lived. War, which changed so many lives, changed also the music of this composer.

The symphony is a full-blown expression of late romanticism. Its themes are beautiful in the traditional sense and they are richly dressed in orchestral color, broad harmonies and swelling crescendos. This symphony surges, mourns, proclaims, sings of a full, sensitive yet sensuous youth. Performed impetuously and impeccably by Conductor Eugene Ormandy and this great orchestra, it is irresistibly appealing to modern audiences.

But the melancholy of such music seems almost joyous beside the relative starkness of the new concerto. His melodic gift here states but does not soar. The themes are more spare, the

orchestration subtler but more dry, the harmonies more dissonant. Only in the final movement, a brilliant allegro, does some of the early spirit revive and even here it is mainly in a virtuosic sense.

The concerto is in many ways a fascinating work, but much of its fascination derives from the fact that it is Rachmaninoff, of the popular and glowing Second Concerto, who composed this austere new music.

Mr. Rachmaninoff's performance as soloist was of enormous importance to the reception of the concerto. He is one of the miracle pianists of our time whose eloquence and virtuosity remain untouched by the years.

## Lunceford Coming

Jimmy Lunceford and his Orchestra will play a one-night dance stand Wednesday night, Oct. 29, at Turner's Arena, 14th and W sts nw. The dance is sponsored by the Mohawk Swing Club.

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