

## Rachmaninoff, F Ormandy Open C Season Here C

Composer Is Guest  
With Symphony

By GLENN DILLARD GUNN

An all-Rachmaninoff program by the Philadelphia Orchestra, with the composer as soloist, opened Washington's symphony season last night in Constitution Hall.

It was, of course, a brilliant event in which a sold-out house participated enthusiastically. The venerable composer sheds at least 40 of his 67 years when he seats himself at the pianoforte. There is no younger virtuoso who can surpass him in virility of tone, in vigor and persuasiveness of musical address, or in command of the resources of his instrument.

Revises Fourth Concerto

This is especially true when he concerns himself with one of his own concertos. Last night he presented the revised version of his fourth concerto, a work heretofore unsuccessful, but now destined to evoke the same sweeping urgency, the same splendors of spirit, the same effect of swift moving pageantry that rushes past the aural vision crowding its impressions one upon the other, and pausing impatiently for the prescribed moments of lyricism and sentiment.

In the second and third piano concertos and in the second symphony, which latter work formed the first half of last night's program, Rachmaninoff set up his own formula. This is something far more significant than a mere architectonic pattern. It includes the sequence of moods which are as basic in his art as the drama of light and shadow in a Rembrandt painting. Predominantly somber, Rachmaninoff's genius is lit by sullen fires that break into the inevitable conflagration of every final movement.

Has More Freedom

The revised fourth concerto is no exception. It has more freedom than the earlier works. His fantasy discovers many unexpected facets of the now familiar formula, notably in the first movement, which, he asserts, has been changed only as to instrumentation. The second movement is appealingly simple in intention though even here the composer cannot restrain his instinct for the dramatic. This finale, like all the others, is a spiritual as well as a technical and orchestral tour de force that mounts impatiently from climax to climax, to spend itself in sound and color, and glittering pianism.

The public gave the composer an ovation, and he generously shared his triumph with Eugene Ormandy, who with the co-operation of the orchestra, gave him superb support.

Perfectly Blended Symphony

The E Minor Symphony, which opened the program, should be heard more frequently. It is a masterly example of the art of thematic development, in which idea and mood and orchestral color are so perfectly wedded that the baton which could separate them would be inept indeed. Ormandy's approach to this masterpiece was humble and became him well. He kept himself out of the picture and left the listener free to follow the strange images which Rachmaninoff's music conjures in the responsive imagination.

The famous scherzo, with its fearful, tender, wistful, and terrible figures that hurtle across the screen of the senses, again achieved its lowering climax, after which even the tumult of the finale seems an anticlimax.

Prestige Sustained

The great Philadelphia Orchestra sustained its prestige last night by demonstrating every interpretative virtue except, perhaps, the excessive pianissimo. This might have enhanced the range of expression in the introduction to the symphony and in the tender song of the adagio. A more tenuous tone may be difficult for the clarinet, but it is desirable, nevertheless, and certainly the strings could have commanded it with ease.

Still it was a great concert and the next visit of the gentlemen from Philadelphia will be awaited with interest.