

Rachmaninoff Once More Charms Symphony-Goers

BY HERBERT ELWELL

Sergei Rachmaninoff seems almost a name out of the past. So long has he been before the musical public that his work is now regarded by some as a closed chapter, yet what he offers, both as a virtuoso pianist and a virtuoso composer, still meets perfectly the taste of the present-day symphony audience as it has that of past decades. By and large a symphony audience loves to be impressed, and there is no composer alive who can write more impressive music, even when his stock of ideas runs low.

This was demonstrated at Severance Hall last night as it has been in many former visits of the celebrated Russian. Rachmaninoff appeared as soloist with the Cleveland Orchestra in his own piano Concerto No. 2 in C minor, at the end of a program in which Dr. Artur Rodzinski conducted the famed pianist's Symphonic Poem, "The Isle of the Dead," and his Symphonic Dances, Op. 45.

The Symphonic Dances were presented here for the first time. This is the first score to have been written by Rachmaninoff in America. It was composed at his home in Huntington, Long Island, in 1940, and was first performed by the Philadelphia Orchestra about a year ago.

The word "dances" even when modified by the adjective "symphonic," does not seem to convey an accurate idea of the structural scope of this work, which is developed on a grand scale and made to sound imposing by the maximum use of orchestral resources, deployed in conventional style and with purely conventional effects. Rodzinski gave the work an earnest, convincing reading, and brought the composer to the stage to acknowledge a long round of applause.

There was even more enthusiasm when Rachmaninoff appeared in the concerto. As usual he gave to his own music luster and animation

that only his brilliant pianism can give it. And it was with evident pleasure that listeners heard from his own hands the drooping, wistful melodies that have now reached the domain of popular music. Rodzinski's accompaniment was skillful, as was also his projection of the familiar "Isle of the Dead," which, in spite of certain weaknesses common to all of Rachmaninoff's work, remains one of the best creations of this Russian Saint-Saens.

Women Battle for War Job Uniforms

WASHINGTON, Jan. 8—(AP)—There's a battle going on along the Potomac that is making some stout-hearted men wish they were in the Far East.

The women, bless 'em, want to do their bit for victory—"but what about a uniform?" they asked.

The Office of Production Management is trying to cut down on civilian use of wool and brass buttons. And those smart American Red Cross uniforms, those gray-blue American Women's Voluntary Services uniforms and some of those hoped for by volunteers in civilian defense are made of wool.

Anyway, OPM has assigned Helen Sisson to the Office of Civilian Defense to tackle its uniform problem. Mrs. Dwight Davis, director of the American Red Cross Volunteer Services, said tonight OPM had assured her that wool would be allotted for uniforms considered essential. She is advising the hundreds of thousands of women enrolled in the Red Cross volunteer services: "Don't order uniform just because you think you look well in one."

Mrs. Roosevelt, assistant Civilian Defense director, is strongly opposed to dress uniforms. But she believes that some sort of uniform or identification is necessary in some types of work.