

# MUSIC

## Rachmaninoff Soloist at Fifth Symphony

By JOHN K. SHERMAN

**S**ERGEI RACHMANINOFF has reached the age that exacts veneration. At 69, with a half century of creative effort behind him, he is one of the patriarchs of the music world, but unlike most patriarchs his powers as artist show no dimming.

In fact, they were disclosed last night with a brilliance and vigor that gave the fifth symphony concert a dazzling aspect. The veneration bestowed upon him by a clapping, standing audience was accompanied, I'm sure, by the somewhat startled realization that this man who appeared so bent, tired and apathetic could write such a youthful,

modern, exuberant work as the Symphonic Dances.

These three Dances closed a program that was almost wholly devoted to Rachmaninoff. The old sorcerer himself took the solo role in his Second piano concerto, then retired to the audience for the post-intermission playing of the Dances.

Nearly four decades separate the two compositions, and the second one shows—more than most people might have guessed—that the Russian composer, despite his seeming isolation, has not been unaware of the currents of music since the turn of the century.

The concerto was its old lovely self. Was there ever a more winning and luscious score than this one? Was there ever expressed in music a more elegant melancholy, a more palatable gloom than is here voiced? The pessimism we feel here is never of the acid kind that verges on cynicism; it is given dignity and nobility and is clad in rich raiment.

And where, in modern and near-modern music, can one find such silken, persuasive, undulating melody—themes, long and winding as the Volga, that wander through an autumnal landscape? Call this a 19th century concerto if you will; that only proves that the 19th was a good century, and probably unjustly maligned.

The Dances are virtuoso writing, and reveal virtuous knowledge of the orchestra and its tonal palette. They contain more vinegar and asperity than the concerto; the instrumentation is vastly subtle and ingenious; the harmonies have more than a dash of dissonance; the treatment of themes and rhythmic ideas is a marvel of plasticity and inventiveness; the climaxes are hair-raising in their rasping calls and sudden detonations.

Dimitri Mitropoulos has never whipped up a more alert and on-the-trigger performance, and the orchestra surpassed itself in quick co-ordination and response all evening. This was evident not only in the Rachmaninoff pieces but also in the curtain-raiser, the Berlioz "King Lear" overture.

This overture was a flashing illustration of Berlioz' uncanny and feverish genius when challenged by a literary subject, as in fact most of his compositions were. The vivid colors, the touch of theatricalism, the glow of the weird, tinged with grandeur and pathos—all these are summed up in the overture, and it was music that seemed to be in Mitropoulos' bloodstream, so accurately did he catch and fasten its moods.

## Poll Tax Bill Faces Death

### 'Gentleman's Pact' Made by Solons

WASHINGTON—(AP)—The senate prepared to go through the motions today of debating abolishment of state poll taxes as a prerequisite for voting in federal elections, although even its supporters conceded the measure was marked for the legislative graveyard.

Balked by a seven-day filibuster carried on by senators from southern poll tax states, proponents finally succeeded in bringing the bill formally before the senate under the terms of an involved "gentleman's agreement" calling for a vote Monday on a motion to limit debate.

Adoption of such a motion would require two-thirds approval of those present and even administration strategists who have fought to obtain action on the measure acknowledged upwards of 40 of the 96 senators would oppose limiting debate.

Democratic Leader Barkley of Kentucky pledged as a part of the "gentleman's agreement" that he would move to lay the bill aside if the debate limitation were declined and would oppose any move by any other senator to bring it up again in this session.

## SHAKEUP OVER, BOLIVIA DUE TO PAY OIL FIRM

LA PAZ, BOLIVIA — (AP) — Speedy approval of an agreement under which Bolivia would pay the Standard Oil Co. \$1,750,000 in settlement of its petroleum concession claims is forecast by political leaders as an aftermath of resignation of President Enrique Penaranda's cabinet Thursday night.

The agreement had been jeop-