

Down The Spillway

THOSE WHO GO to the concerts of the Philadelphia orchestra and stand up in the rear—there are usually a hundred or so—saw something the other night that the sit-downers missed. They saw Rachmaninoff, the pianist-composer, come into the darkened hall just as the orchestra started playing his symphony. He slipped into a rear box and sat there with his overcoat and his gloves on throughout the work. They judged, moreover, that he liked what he heard for his hard, heavily lined face relaxed as he listened, he smiled quite broadly two or three times and in the rhythmic passages he bobbed his cropped head in time with the music. Once or twice he turned his head ever so slightly and threw a word or two toward someone sitting just behind him.

My informant's neighboring standees were two sailors off the U. S. S. Texas and they agreed, in the intimacy that comes to those who like music well enough to pay to stand up and listen to it, that it must be a pretty nice feeling to walk into a concert hall and hear your own composition being intelligently performed by a full orchestra. It must be even nicer to know that several thousand people are giving it rapt attention. But it must be painful in the extreme if some member of that audience, not knowing that the composer is listening, makes a disparaging remark about the music in his hearing. But that didn't happen Wednesday night as far as the standees could see.