

## Rachmaninoff In Liverpool

### New Work Played At Philharmonic

By Our Music Critic

Overture, "Beatrice and Benedict" ..... Berlioz  
Symphony No. 2 in D minor ..... Dvorak  
Rhapsody on a theme of Paganini, Rachmaninoff  
Rhapsody, "In the Mountain Country" ..... Moeran  
Rhapsody, "In Ireland" ..... Harty  
Irish Rhapsody No. 4 ..... Stanford

SIR HAMILTON HARTY.

This was in many ways an attractive, not to say exciting programme, and judging by the size of the audience the concert was regarded as an occasion.

Here was Rachmaninoff, one of the most famous and distinguished of living musicians, and one of the finest pianists—many judges even omit the qualification—in the world, to give the first performance here of a work written little more than eighteen months ago—an example of celerity in travel only possible with a Great Figure. Excellent gramophone records have familiarised us with the work, and actual performance did not alter one's opinion of it. For all its many qualities it does not go very deep. Rachmaninoff does not succeed in making the variation form an emotional vehicle as Brahms does, for instance, both in the "St. Anthony" and the variations on this same Paganini theme. Perhaps he did not try. But I could not help feeling that, if not the intention, at anyrate the effect of this work is almost entirely virtuosic. As the Mad Hatter observed, however, it was the best butter, and whatever the work may be considered to lack in feeling, it wants little in ingenuity and nothing at all in brilliantly effective writing for the combination.

#### NO ENCORE

Rachmaninoff, of course, played superbly. His music reflects his playing in a curious way, so that no one could possibly play it better than he does himself. And with Sir Hamilton Harty producing an unusual alertness from the orchestra, the performance was a vivid and highly exciting affair. Rachmaninoff afterwards took half a dozen calls, but impassively resisted the most insistent demands for an encore—another privilege only possible to a Great Figure.

The concert opened with a performance of the truly enchanting "Beatrice and Benedict" overture of Berlioz so good that one wondered what sorcery Sir Hamilton had used. But the Dvorak symphony brought us down to earth very quickly. Presumably, the Berlioz being short, Sir Hamilton had been able to secure at rehearsal some of the polish which the ensemble difficulties of the work demand if it is to be given at all. But, obviously, you cannot rub up every bar of a symphony in two rehearsals, and one's pleasure at the beauty, spirit, strength and melodic charm of this practically unknown work was spoiled to a large extent by the extreme rough-

## "The Mikado"

### D'Oyly Carte Company's Fine Performance

"THE MIKADO." D'Oyly Carte Opera Company.—Empire Theatre.

Like the boy, asked where the capital of England is, who replied that it is all over the world, one asks oneself what is the best thing in "The Mikado," and is forced to answer that it lasts all through it.

Of all the Gilbert and Sullivan works this seems to me the one that is surest of success with a modern audience. There is extraordinarily little in the libretto that is not as effective to-day as it was half-a-century ago. We still have with us practically everything that is on that "little list"—"Parliamentary trains" is about the only phrase in the whole work likely to puzzle newcomers to its delights.

As for the music, familiarity has not rubbed off its sparkle nor materially dulled the edge of its blithe wit. Only the settings and some of the first act costumes are so out of the modern mode in these things as to seem a shade dowdy.

Last night's production got better and better as it went on. Just as often as one thought that Martyn Green's brilliant Ko-Ko had exhausted the comic possibilities, he succeeded in producing something even funnier. It was a performance that never faltered. The audience it was that fell.

Sydney Granville's Pooh-Bah had the superbly bland swagger that the part needs, and Dorothy Gill's Katisha the quality of personality that made one believe that even Darrell Fancourt's ferociously grotesque Mikado would cover before her. Brenda Bennett sang sweetly and attractively as Yum-Yum, and Marjorie Eyre, as Pitti-Sing, and Charles Goulding, as Nanki-Poo, were always doing effective work. P. R.

#### PRESCOT RATE UNCHANGED

Prescot Council last night decided to levy a rate of 13s 6d in the pound, the same as last year.

ness and general lack of quality of most of the playing. Indeed, Mr. Barker's two fragmentary violin solos were like angelic voices bidding us remember that the violin can still be made to produce beautiful sounds.

#### ST. PATRICK'S NIGHT

St. Patrick was honoured by three short works to end the concert. Moeran's rhapsody, "In the Mountain Country," is a distinguished and beautiful work in a well-established genre; Sir Hamilton's "In Ireland" is a not dissimilar type of work written with his keen feeling for the essence of his national music and his invariably skilful orchestral touch, and Stanford's "Irish Rhapsody" in A minor, the fourth "rhapsody" in this programme and the fifth work to be labelled "First time at these concerts," concluded the evening. T. J. B.