

**PHILHARMONIC SOCIETY CONCERT**

**RACHMANINOFF**

Overture, "Balthus 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 — Harty

SIR HAMILTON HARTY.

It is rarely that the Philharmonic Society is able to boast the presence of two composers each taking part in their own works. But with Mr. Rachmaninoff playing his own "Paganini" rhapsody and Sir Hamilton Harty conducting his own Irish fantasy, or rhapsody (the programme called it by both names), there was a distinctly personal note in last night's concert. Sir Hamilton evidently intended the programme to be something in the nature of a celebration—it was St. Patrick's Day—and the proceedings in the second half became very rhapsodical and elated in an Irish sense.

That apart, there was Rachmaninoff himself, whose presence at any concert is enough to make the occasion significant. He played but a single work, and nothing would persuade him to play an encore, for Rachmaninoff does not deal in anti-climaxes. The applause was terrific, a tribute to the artist, though, in point of fact, the artist did not seem to one listener to be at the height of his form. A small blunder in the woodwind early in the variations rather unsettled

**GIFTS TO BIRKEN**



The Mayor of Birkenhead making a speech at the Town Hall yesterday, to Catherine Mrs. E. A. Steadman, for heroic Catherine carried her sister Sheila attempt to save her. Miss M. Steadman, a

the performance, which was just a little on edge and strained throughout. It is a stupendous piece, calling forth the highest flights of pianoforte technique, and in that respect a kind of indirect homage, as is Brahms's set of variations on the same theme, to the Victorian wizard of the violin. As variations they are not, perhaps, as imposing as those of Brahms, and the approach is even more deliberately that of a virtuoso. But such is the colossal technique of Rachmaninoff that he plays this work as effortlessly as if it were the easiest thing in the world. I have heard him play it better, and I have even heard better orchestral playing than the Philharmonic Orchestra graced us with last night. But anything may happen on a wild occasion of this sort.

It was an excitable concert, what with Berlioz and the Bohemian exuberance of the Dvorak symphony. The symphony is not the best of Dvorak, though its themes are inviting enough and the general air of strenuousness is relieved by some charming lyrical passages. It would be a pity, however, to judge it on the rather rough treatment it received at the hands of the orchestra last night.

Mr. Moeran's rhapsody, "inspired by some experiences of the composer in the wild Connemara country" and dedicated to last night's conductor, is more particularly inspired by musical precedents that have arisen nearer home. I do not doubt that it is genuine, and there is some pleasant scoring, but I seem to have heard this sort of thing before and it seems a rather slight contribution to original music. Sir Hamilton's own "Rhapsody" has more gusto, more race, more virtuosity. It comes off, but (saving the occasion) it was surely somewhat indiscreet to do, in regard to the shamrock, whatever is the equivalent of gilding the lily. In short, he rubbed it in a little too much. When Stanford's "Irish" rhapsody followed, I must confess I fled, in company with a number of other plain, unadorned Saxons. A. K. H.