

ST. LOUIS
**SERGEI RACHMANINOFF
PRESENTS NEW WORK**

Golschmann Directs Program
in Which Symphony in A
Minor Is Offered.

By **THOMAS B. SHERMAN.**

For the second time in two years Sergei Rachmaninoff has come to St. Louis bearing a special gift for the musical public in the form of a new work. It was his new symphony in A Minor this time, a symphony which recently had its world premiere in Philadelphia and which was allotted the place of honor on the program presented yesterday afternoon in the Municipal Auditorium under the direction of Vladimir Golschmann.

A new work by a man of such extraordinary quality and reputation as Rachmaninoff would have naturally created a special occasion by itself. But the emotions of the moment were further intensified—as might have been expected—by the brooding presence of the composer in the flesh who not only lent his intangible support of the playing of the symphony but played himself the solo piano in the performance of his C Minor concerto. It was therefore an occasion for everybody—even for misguided persons who had no special craving for the Rachmaninoff variety of Slavic nostalgia. For they could listen to him play and realize that there was the romantic style of piano playing in a state of glowing perfection.

Masterly Anachronism.

The symphony in A Minor, however, was still the chief work of the afternoon and excited the greatest amount of interest in spite of the fact that it expressed no new experience and broke no new paths. The essential emotions from which he drew the inspiration for the work were the same as had always served him. The unreticent type of expression was likewise the same. There were many features of rhythm, harmony and line that obviously derived from the good old days when Russian hearts were made to be broken. One might put it in another way by saying that the work was in the grand tradition of the great Slavic school of composers. Or one might simply say it was a masterly anachronism.

In any case it was representative Rachmaninoff, with material that was just as appealing and with construction that was just as assured as ever. In addition it had more energy and variety than either of its symphonic predecessors. This was more a matter of an increased vitality expressing itself through a greater quantitative complexity than of any psychological change on the part of the composer. At bottom it was still a recognizable Tchaikowskian pessimism.

First Is Most Impressive.

The first two movements were the most impressive both in the freshness of the material and in its working out. The mood was romantic, the expression was free but the line of thought was always clear. In the last movement, however, both melodic invention and craftsmanship fell off somewhat. The effect was like a set of variations on a theme that nobody could remember.

The orchestra performed the work with great spirit and to the apparent satisfaction of the composer. Mr. Golschmann obviously was sparing nothing in his effort to make a complete identification between his mood and that of the work. There were times when a little more string power was needed to keep the brass and percussion from breaking through. But the orchestra had plenty of life.

The performance of the C Minor concerto was a thoroughly satisfactory piece of virtuosity. If anything, Mr. Rachmaninoff played with more freedom and with more indulgence for those melancholy dying falls of the music than ever before. And that, no doubt, is the way it should be played.

After receiving an ovation for his performance as a pianist Mr. Rachmaninoff was recalled to the stage for a further tribute after the conclusion of the symphony—a tribute in which the brass players added a rousing fanfare.

The afternoon's performance began with a Concerto da Chiesa by the Italian eighteenth century composer dall'Abaco in an arrangement by Ebene Baton. It was chaste agreeable music but with the odors of the museum still on it despite the efforts of both the arranger and the orchestra.