

# Rachmaninoff Dominates Music 'Treat'

By RALPH LEWANDO  
Press Music Critic

A new chapter of real achievement was written into local music history last night at Syria Mosque by the Pittsburgh Symphony Society and its young leader, Antonio Modarelli, who, with Sergei Rachmaninoff as piano soloist, scored the most notable success in the annals of the orchestra.

For 10 years the orchestra has struggled to reach the point of accomplishment revealed at this second event this year. If the pace disclosed last night continues, great things are ahead for the Pittsburgh Symphony Society, its conductor and the community.



Of course, the music and personality of Rachmaninoff were dominant features of the concert and no doubt acted as an inspiring influence in contributing to the thorough-going success of the occasion.

Be that as it may, quality of orchestral performance never once waned during the entire program.

With practically every seat in the auditorium occupied, the program got under way. Most appropriate as a prelude to what was to follow was the choice of Beethoven's "Leonore" Overture, No. 3—one of four which the composer wrote for his opera, Fidelio—as an opening number. This number was given a thoughtful spirited projection.

### Genius Moves Audience

The remainder of the list was devoted to Rachmaninoff works—the superb 2nd concerto—one of four which the great Russian has created—and the new 3rd symphony, a work which was premiered by the Philadelphia Orchestra under Stokowski at Philadelphia less than a month ago and subsequently performed by that orchestra in New York City, and by the St. Louis Orchestra under Golschman a few days ago in the Mound City.

When Rachmaninoff—gaunt and taciturn, appeared to play the solo part of his piano concerto, the entire orchestra arose as a gesture of

respect and admiration, while the vast audience broke loose with applause which lasted a few minutes. Rachmaninoff, acknowledging this display of recognition seldom bestowed upon an artist, bowed with all the dignity of his huge frame, and then took his seat at the piano.

### Rare Artistic Treat

The ensuing performance was a rare artistic treat, every page of this glowing music being set forth with clarity, emotional force and consummate collaboration of orchestra, conductor and soloist. For all of his 64 years Rachmaninoff endowed his playing with subtle musical elements that heightened the intensity of the ever changing tonal tints that color the entire score, and all this accomplished with the ardor of youth, yet with the care that bespeaks the master.

Unforgettable is the Adagio with its eternal song and wistfulness. Added to Rachmaninoff's magnificent performance was the remarkably fine collaboration supplied by Antonio Modarelli. His endeavor was the best exhibition of

accompaniment he has ever given. At the conclusion of the concerto a demonstration of applause broke out that recalled the famous Man of Muscovy a half dozen times. Then when he resumed his place at the keyboard to play an extra and began his own and popular C-sharp minor Prelude, the hand clapping began again.

Rachmaninoff evidently was very moved, for he rarely responds with encores. That he did so was a tribute to his public. And how he played this exquisite piece which is

destined to live forever!

The final number brought to its first local presentation Rachmaninoff's third symphony. In this work one perceives the fine workmanship of a brilliant composer, replete with instrumental combinations of fine tonal effects. At times it is reminiscent of the more inspired second symphony. It is not our intention to judge on one lone hearing the work of a great artist and composer whose contribution to musical art is so vast.

Mr. Modarelli and his players gave unstintedly of themselves in bringing this work to performance. Even with only four rehearsals due to belated arrival of the parts, their projection of this work proved a creditable endeavor.

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