

# RACHMANINOFF STAR OF ACADEMY 'SHOW'

**Phila. Orchestra and Chorus  
Gives His 'Bells'; Composer  
Plays C Minor Concerto**

By HENRY C. BECK

This is Rachmaninoff weekend in Philadelphia.

Yesterday afternoon's program of the Philadelphia Orchestra, presenting Rachmaninoff's setting of "The Bells" and Rachmaninoff in person playing his own Concerto No. 2 in C Minor, will be repeated tonight. If you are music-minded, there's no better place for you to be this evening.

The "Bells" Symphony is presented by the orchestra, with Agnes Davis, Fritz Krueger and Elwood Hawkins as soloists and the University of Pennsylvania Choral Society doing the choral work. Harl McDonald director, prepared the chorus, and Eugene Ormandy—there's absolutely no limit to this man's musical stature!—satisfactorily directs the concerted enterprise.

Any setting of Poe's poem would be unusual, simply because, from this reviewer's standpoint, Poe is more rhythm than melody. A sinister monotone, with a shadowy background of tonal gloom, would be more than appropriate.

#### Composer Has Own Ideas

The combination of Rachmaninoff and Poe, on the other hand, may be quite as unusual, but it is true that many of their ideas are similar. However, Rachmaninoff's ideas about "The Bells" and how they should ring in a musical way, are something else again.

There are four movements, the first "The Silver Sleigh-Bells," the second, "The Mellow Wedding Bells," and third, "The Loud Alarum Bells" and the fourth, "The Mournful Iron Bells." The third and fourth movements are perhaps more Poe than the rest.

Certainly the "Loud Alarum Bells" for orchestra and chorus, without

soloists, is the best of all, and could be well sung by itself as a chunk of straight Poe. The final movement is somewhat spoiled by a rather heavenly interpretation of the last line, "the quiet of the tomb." This shifts everything to a satisfactory conclusion as far as rounding out the music is concerned, but it doesn't leave the Poe flavor intact.

However, the presentation of the symphony is something you won't hear again in an age and is something to remember. Ormandy stamps himself a genius of balancing a corps of orchestra and voices and a hearing of the opus, despite solo voices which could be heavier, moves one to cheers.

The Rachmaninoff dish is completed by the composer's appearance as soloist in the Second Concerto, which is another program, really. The gentleman was in splendid fettle yesterday and a packed academy gave him an ovation. It was obvious that the celebrated pianist was enthusiastic about the presentation and Ormandy's conducting of the program, which, though it embraced but two weeks, is a gigantic undertaking.

United States Forest Service tests have shown that heating requirements of houses are tripled if the houses are unprotected by trees when cold winds blow at a rate of more than 20 miles an hour.

An English bridge nearly a century and a half old withstood loads weighing up to 90 tons before it collapsed in a series of experiments to determine what old bridges needed rebuilding for modern traffic.

