

RACHMANINOFF THIRD SYMPHONY IS HAILED HERE

New Work on Program Of Phila. Orchestra

By WILLIAM NEWMAN

Rachmaninoff's Third Symphony, finished last August at his home in Switzerland, had its first Washington performance last night in Constitution Hall at the opening concert of the Philadelphia Orchestra's series.

The audience gave the new work an excited welcome, though much of the applause seemed to be inspired by a natural desire to bring the composer to the stage. He was present, of course, having accepted the assignment as soloist in the first performance here of his first piano concerto, heard later on the program.

Rachmaninoff did not acknowledge the tributes of the public elicited by the new symphony. This hardly could have been occasioned by any dissatisfaction on his part with the quality of the performance, which, under Ormandy's newly resumed baton, was remarkable for its clarity, beauty and sympathy.

NOT EASY TO READ

The new symphony, however, is not an easy page to read at first contact. Like all Rachmaninoff's later compositions it develops an involved idiom. The frank, urgent song of the second symphony is not heard in this work. There are acoustic complications surrounding an intricate interweaving of melodies that baffle and bemuse the listener.

However, the new work is concise, compact, concentrated, beautifully logical; and to these technical virtues it adds a flaming imagination for rhythmical impulse for orchestral color, for climax and anti-climax, so that the whole expression beats upon the senses with a thousand demands for attention and response.

CEASED TO WEEP

It will be liked at once. In time it may be loved as is the sad, wistful and finally rebellious second symphony. Surely it will be respected more for its virtues of technic and design. That it will tug at the heart strings with that same curious blend of tenderness and despair does not seem probable. Rachmaninoff has ceased to weep for the Russia that banished him.

The concerto is the product of youthful genius retouched by the hand of age and experience. Rachmaninoff wrote it at 18, rewrote it at 44 and now revives it again at 65 to make of it superb pianistic display. He has every right to look upon it with affection for it has many beauties. Nor does he intend to impute to it the possession of such startling powers of feeling or of invention as have been realized in the second and third piano concertos or even in the "Paganini" rhapsody.

The Philadelphia Orchestra comes again the last Tuesday of November.