

ORMANDY PROGRAM FEATURES 3 WORKS

Rachmaninoff Piece Is Given
by Philadelphia Orchestra
at Carnegie Hall

COMPOSER THEN PLAYS

Heard as Pianist in Beethoven
Music—Strauss's 'Don Juan'
Concludes the Concert

By OLIN DOWNES

The individuality, interpretive and creative, of one of the greatest musicians of this epoch, Serge Rachmaninoff, dominated the concert given by the Philadelphia Orchestra, Eugene Ormandy, conductor, last night in Carnegie Hall. Mr. Rachmaninoff was heard first as a composer, when Mr. Ormandy conducted his Third symphony; then as pianist, when he played Beethoven's C major Concerto with the orchestra. Richard Strauss's "Don Juan," conducted by Mr. Ormandy, ended the concert.

The Third symphony is an interesting milestone in its composer's development. It stems logically from the Second, although it is separated from that score by many years, and is a much more highly developed, if perhaps less spontaneous, manifestation of the earlier tendencies. Or let us say that this late symphony reveals the same temperament, the same musical personality and the same essentially racial blood-stream. It is Slavic in the contour of the themes and in various rhythmical features, and it is unmistakably Rachmaninoff in characteristics, not easily defined, which distinguish his earlier style. In this the symphony is somewhat of a surprise, for in other scores which followed the Second symphony Rachmaninoff seemed to have made certain departures from the straight path of his previous development.

Symphony Is Effective

This symphony is less radical in harmonic scheme than other scores by a composer who is rated orthodox as a harmonist today. It is big structure, comprehensive of all the formal symphonic elements. Thus the middle movement combines the material of slow movement and scherzo. The symphony appears over-long and laden with detail. It does not break new ground, but it has a genuineness of feeling and an imaginative vein which in part, at least, are compensatory. While many pages are dark and introspective, the ending is affirmative, triumphant. The symphony was well performed and well received.

Mr. Rachmaninoff's personal triumph came with his performance of the early and somewhat rococo Beethoven concerto. He played the piano part with the most exemplary clarity and grace, with rhythmical precision and energy, and technical mastery of passages of a deceptive simplicity. This was a master's performance. The remarkable thing was the effect of this music upon the audience. The concerto is not a display piece; the passage writing is of Mozart rather than the Beethoven period, and by no means the kind of writing which reveals the resources of a modern piano. But the composition took the audience by storm.

Pianist Recalled Often

No doubt the personality of the performer had much to do with its reception, but certainly not everything. The music captivated by its vitality, its sparkle, simplicity and perfect form. No one could appreciate these things more than Rachmaninoff, who was well content to refrain from any special display, even omitting the cadenzas which Beethoven wrote himself for his concerto, and to project the pure line, the lofty expression and, in the finale, the riotous humor of mighty Ludwig.

The audience, delighted, recalled the interpreter repeatedly, and was unable, apparently, to have enough of him.

Strauss's "Don Juan," at one time a stumbling block for any but the greatest orchestras, now plays itself, and Mr. Ormandy is one of its most enthusiastic interpreters. He erred on the side of excessive fortissimos and climaxes, effects which sometimes defeated their own purpose. But it is not easy to play this proud and fiery music in cold blood.