

RACHMANINOFF IS SOLOIST AT NINTH FRIDAY CONCERT

Program of Russian's
Works Attracts Large
Throng to Symphony

By JOHN K. SHERMAN
The highest summit of a music season that has already risen to many peaks of grandeur was reached at last night's all-Rachmaninoff concert in Northrop auditorium, with the composer himself as guest soloist.

Serge Rachmaninoff is a figure of such commanding importance in the music world, both as composer and pianist, that it seems presumptuous to indulge in the usual detailed criticism. One is persuaded to listen and to absorb, to use the opportunity of his appearance here for drinking in what he offers us rather than sitting aloof in the customary objective attitude.

That, at least, is a personal reaction to the program that presented, in addition to the artist himself, two of his greatest orchestral compositions—the Second symphony in E minor and the second piano concerto in C minor.

It was a fitting tribute to the great Russian artist to devote the entire evening to his works. It gave us full opportunity to study and understand his idiom and to make contact with the breadth and scope of his personality as reflected in his composition. It was a rare and precious opportunity in all ways—one which we may not soon enjoy again.

Perhaps from no other living composer do we receive more the impact of personality, of personal philosophy in terms of tone. The effort to express these things has lately gone out of fashion, for most of his contemporaries are more occupied with the search for originality of expression than with the matter which is expressed. Rachmaninoff has preferred to stay outside of the mad scramble for new forms and methods. We imagine he has small patience for the future over atonality and polytonality and other experiments designed to accelerate music's natural and gradual process of evolution.

Whatever his views on this score, his music makes deep and lasting impression by reason of its sincerity, its intense seriousness and its consummate workmanship. The symphony and concerto we heard last night illustrated these qualities, and they fitted in with the picture he made on the platform—an unassuming, unsmiling figure who wears his greatness modestly and is content to let his music speak for itself.

Some critics suggest that his music is not truly Russian, that its classic foundation and structure inherit more from Tchaikowsky, the cosmopolitan Slav, than it does from Moussorgsky and his colleagues of the last century who went to Russian sources for their inspiration. This may be in a measure true, yet the reflective, introspective mood of his writing, with its definite trend toward pessimism and resignation, seems more Russian than anything else. This pessimism never plumbs the plaintive depths of Tchaikowsky, but is rather the mirroring of a personality which, if brooding, is nevertheless composed and temperate.

The symphony is cast in traditional style; its forms and manner may be orthodox but its content is the vital stuff of personality, not given to smiling, or flippancies or even joy. Even its spirited sections are always underlined and surrounded with the grave gravity of the composer's purpose. It is long and prolix—a lingering prolixity which, as in Schubert, seems disinclined to abandon a theme or idea once it is voiced. It is twined with long, graceful and willowy melodies that touch dark depths and are clad in dark hues. Its adagio is a veritable ode to melancholy, which turns away from, rather than faces the world, and drifts inevitably to gloom. This seems the keynote of the work, despite the dramatic flair and dash of the more affirmative final movement.

The concerto, one of the loveliest of its kind, was given the finest reading ever heard here. With the composer at the piano, and with Eugene Ormandy imbuing the orchestra with almost divine powers of interpretation, the performance was a miracle of vitality, subtlety and interpretive insight. Rachmaninoff is as great a pianist as he is a composer; for he showed himself master of nuance and

Dr. White Named Zuhrah Potentate



Dr. F. Denton White, Minneapolis dentist (above) today had been elected potentate of Zuhrah Temple of the Shrine, succeeding W. R. Stephens. The annual election was held Friday night at the Shrine club, 3448 Park avenue. Other officers elected are Raymond G. Butts, chief rabbi; Martin H. Otto, assistant rabbi; Elmer H. Smith, high priest and prophet; William MacPhail, oriental guide; J. S. Pomroy, treasurer; J. F. Gould, executive secretary, and George K. Edden, trustee for three years. Mr. Stephens, Dr. White, A. B. Bainbridge and Herbert C. Todd were named imperial representatives.

expressiveness, an artist whose deceptively halting manner as he walks to the piano is belied by an energy that seems concentrated in his arms and long-fingered hands.

We have spoken little of the orchestra's performance, under Ormandy, or of the latter's astonishing feat of memorizing and perfecting the symphony in a single week's time. Suffice to say that their work set a standard which few orchestras or conductors attain. Minneapolis is lucky to have such a combination in Northrop auditorium.

MACCABEE TENT NAMES DR. MEDOF

Edward Haas tent of Maccabees today was headed by Dr. B. M. Medof as commander, it was announced following the annual election of officers. Other officers for 1932 are: Sam J. Cohn, past commander; Perry Sheffel, lieutenant commander; M. D. Himmelstein, chaplain; Louis V. Kerner, record keeper; Z. Deib, man, finance keeper; Sidney Sway, sergeant at arms, and Phillip Mirvine, master at arms. M. Levinson and B. Wolfson are guards; Jack Rose, picket; Ben Kieffer, sentinel, and Julius B. Badner, trustee.

RELIEF GROUP GETS AUDITORIUM FREE

Permission to use the Minneapolis auditorium free of charge was given for the first time to the Minneapolis Day Relief committee, headed by Oscar W. Behrens, secretary to Mayor William A. Anderson. Behrens submitted a request to the city council asking free use of the auditorium Jan. 15 for a "prosperity ball," planned to raise money for the unemployed. All services in connection with the function are to be donated, he said.

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