

MUSIC

Rachmaninoff With Symphony.

At least one question was permanently settled in this writer's mind, Friday evening, when the symphony orchestra gave its ninth concert at Northrop auditorium. I learned how to spell the artist's name correctly. Rachmaninoff is the way it should be written, not Rachmaninow, which is not so far from being right and most emphatically never Rachmaninov. On this latter point Madame Rachmaninoff was very insistent.

That being definitely settled we may now take up the program which was all Rachmaninoff creatively, with a good deal of Ormandy thrown in for good measure. I know the composer was delighted with Ormandy's interpretation of the symphony, which may after all not mean what it seems, for composers are not always the best judges of how their works should be performed, but when this opinion is reinforced by that of somewhere around 5,000 people we are likely to be convinced if we need any conviction.

In this case there was no need, for under Ormandy's baton this great symphony came to the audience with telling power. We have always had the feeling that there was something peculiarly fateful in this work and it may have been part of the composer's purpose to be fateful when he wrote it, but there was far less of this quality Friday evening than we have ever heard.

Blessed be youth which refuses to find overwhelming gloom when there are pleasanter things around. I mean by that there really is no use in stressing what may be obviously present that is altogether too introspective. There is far more to this symphony than the "Toten Insel" idea. It is no symphony of death or even the threat of it, for one may find joyous passages, not many of them to be sure, but they are present.

There is a philosophic gravity that is conducive to heaviness but as a matter of fact, while Ormandy made us feel the profundity of the composer's thought he never permitted himself to subordinate the searching human elements that appear in every movement to lead him into opaque extravagances. We liked the interpretation, not because it was a wonderful exhibition of technical efficiency by the orchestra, rather because of the many places that were brightened by the ardor of our conductor.

Rachmaninoff was superb. He is a personality that one perceives the moment he slowly walks on the stage. He gives the impression of power, his deliberateness, whether assumed for effect or otherwise, serves its purpose. His manner of taking his seat at the piano, as though utterly bored with the trivial things of life, give poignancy and brilliance to his playing for the moment he touches the keyboard an electric thrill runs through an audience.

It was not merely the picture of a great man somewhat bowed down with years of devotion to his art that stimulated one's imagination, it was the vital force that proceeded through his fingers from his brain to the instrument that created illusions. But are they illusions? It seemed to me that there were times when the artist was telling his audience something of his history.

This was most markedly evident in the Adagio, which was beautiful enough with an undercurrent of sadness, but it was a beauty that was permeated with heart throbs, which made the music tremendously emotional. There is nothing quite so impressive as a great soul strongly moved and trying to conceal that

which is trying to force its way outward.

This was the impression this music made on me as it was played by its creator. Certainly I have never heard Rachmaninoff when he gave more of himself to those who were listening to him. He still has all the physical attributes that made him a lion of the concert halls. Perhaps something of sheer physical vigor has gone but there were compensations for that loss in the combination of intellectual and emotional power he unites so magnificently. So long as he can combine these elements in his playing there is no danger that he will fall to be persona grata with any discriminating audience.

Nor must we forget that to the artist's own genius as an interpreter must be added the superlative support given by the orchestra. This was collaboration of supreme artistic significance in the moulding of this C minor concerto into a majestic whole. It needs no criticism for it was satisfying to the last degree.

JAMES DAVIES.

A

BI

EVERY

Price

Rossm

THE MOS'

A THOROUGH I

SUIT TO MAKI