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# Rachmaninoff Charms Audience With Own Rapsodie

**Stokowski's Conducting of Work by Mary Howe Qualifies Musically Expert**

By DR. KURT HETZEL

The Philadelphia Orchestra, Leopold Stokowski conducting, gave its first concert yesterday at Constitution Hall.

Rachmaninoff played his own new "Rapsodie" on a theme by Paganini for piano and orchestra.

Though the two names alone, in combination with the great orchestra, would have assured an outstanding success, the program offered an added feature by including the work of a Washington musician, Mary Howe.

Rachmaninoff played his brilliant new score with supreme mastery and was accorded an ovation. He is an overpowering figure in today's music world, a genius as composer and one of the few great pianists alive.

"Rapsodie" is his best work so far. Moments of sheer beauty, as the ending of a slow movement in D major, give way to tremendously sweeping passages. Its harmonization is modern with a Russian accent, yet concise in form and clear in its thematic treatment. New pianistic effects and a most colorful handling of the orchestra combine with interesting dialogues. As a whole it is an inspiring masterpiece of monumental dimensions.

Stokowski commenced the program with Stravinsky's "Fire Bird" and gave it an inspired reading, conducting without baton, but with amazing precision.

General interest centered, naturally, in Mary Howe's work. "Sand" is a tone picture of objects in motion. Unlike others of the same kind, as the thundering



**AT CONSTITUTION HALL**—Mrs. Franklin D. Roosevelt attended last night's symphony program, heard distinguished guest pianist Sergei Rachmaninoff and brought with her (l. to r.) Miss Esther Lape, Miss Mildred Prince, Miss Marguerite Le Hand and Miss Lorena Hickok. She occupied box number thirteen—the Presidential Box. Dr. Leopold Stokowski conducted the Philadelphia Symphony Orchestra.

Washington Herald Staff Photo

"Iron Foundry" or the roaring "Pacific 231," it depicts gliding sand, through a succession of gently murmuring phrases.

The absence of a clearly developed thematical structure, the omission of a proper ascent toward the final arrival at a towering climax, the extended substitution of cacophony for harmony—all that suggests a certain influence of the teachings in free, atonal phraseology, as represented in the works by Mary Howe's instructor, Gustaf Strube, of Baltimore. But Mary Howe's phrase-

ology is superior to Strube's, for not to our knowledge here in the latter is not presented on the Washington programs of Stokowski, at least.

As the title "Sand" for this opus

**First Philadelphia Orchestra Concert Offers Masterly, Precise Execution**

implies, it was not intended to arouse emotions. Its chief merit is found in the orchestration which makes use of adequate color combinations throughout and shows the hand of a master.

The last part of the program was filled with the magnificent symphony in F major by Brahms. Stokowski positively knows this score, not only by memory but in every detail of its finely woven thematic material. Yet some of the composer's noblest thoughts eluded his grasp. His interpretation rose note quite to the high standards he himself has established on previous occasions. Nevertheless, it scored and was enthusiastically applauded.

At the close of the concert there was a reward for those who refused to leave the hall, recalling Stokowski time and again. Stokowski thanked with a little speech, regretting this was the only concert he was to lead here this season, whereafter he played two exquisite short compositions by Frescobaldi and Palestrina.

The Philadelphia Orchestra is today beyond question the best in the country. It will appear in two more concerts this season.

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