

RACHMANINOFF PLAYS WITH THE SYMPHONY

Pianist Gives Own Rhapsody on Theme From Paganini for First Time.

By THOMAS B. SHERMAN.

SERGEI RACHMANINOFF, whose gaunt Buddhistic countenance contrasts so oddly with the purple plush of his music, drew an enormous audience to the Municipal Auditorium yesterday afternoon when he appeared with St. Louis Symphony Orchestra in the dual capacity of composer and pianist. It was an excited audience, too—excited first by his provocative appearance, then by what he and the orchestra had to play, and then by his way of playing it.

Rachmaninoff—even when he is disclosing the familiar measures of one of his established concertos—makes an occasion all by himself. But yesterday's concert was considerably pointed up by the fact that he was playing for the first time his newly composed Rhapsody on a Theme from Paganini's Caprice No. 24. Though it turned out to be rather familiar music after all, this was obviously not held against him. For it was sensational music in a very strict sense. It diverted the ear, stimulated the pulse and posed no problems for the intellect that could not be resolved in the course of a 10-minute intermission.

By his own admission, Mr. Rachmaninoff has passed the greater part of this century in a state of insensibility to all the sound and fury that has been roaring about his ears. "Success dominates artistic life," he declared once in an interview. "It carries us away with it and hardly leaves us time enough to gather new impressions. These are confined to a period of the artist's life before he attains success."

That being so, it is not remarkable that his Rhapsody, which is really a "Theme and Variations"—is in a style that would not have startled informed listeners as far back as 1890. It is a ripe neo-Tschaikowskian style, rich in color, interesting in rhythm, full of diverting melodic sequences, and all handsomely orchestrated. It is effective music, but what it has to say is fairly obvious even at the first hearing.

Rachmaninoff the composer is fortunate in having Rachmaninoff the pianist as an interpreter. Any composer would be, for that matter. His performance was distinguished, as always, by a rich and beautiful quality that was as much apparent in rapid passages or against heavy orchestration as when the piano was being heard by itself. What is usually understood by the word poetic was the consistent characteristic of his playing. For the beautiful tone was reinforced always by the finely curved phrase and the telling if unobtrusive accent.

After receiving the usual ovation and bowing many times, Rachmaninoff still declined to play an encore. He wanted his new work to stand by itself—a natural and an appropriate desire.

The orchestra contributed its share to the excitement of the occasion not only by playing Rachmaninoff's Rhapsody with assurance and vitality, but with a rousing performance of the Tschaikowsky E Minor Symphony. The transcriptions of eight Russian folk songs by Liadoff were even better played, in that they were even more carefully shaded and more precisely articulated.

In his treatment of the symphony Conductor Golschmann took it for granted that the composer was not trying to hide his message and

AGAIN ONLY FINLAND PAYS ITS WAR DEBT

Installment Day Brings in \$228,538 of \$629,816,000 Due U. S. or Past Due.

By the Associated Press.

WASHINGTON, Dec. 15.—Another war debt payment day brought the United States only \$228,538 out of \$629,816,000 due or past due today.

Finland's check for \$228,538, paid to the Federal Reserve Bank in New York City this morning, was the only cash collected.

Estonia, Latvia and Rumania were expected to announce today their default on their installments. Eight other nations already had said they would make no payments.

A note from John Pelenyi, Hungarian Minister, said Hungary would deposit a certificate in pengoes, bearing interest at 2 per cent, in the Hungarian National Bank as acknowledgement of its installment, but no provision for collecting the pengoes has been made.

Under-Secretary of State William Phillips said no new moves to solve the debt question were under way. The total of the debts is about \$12,000,000,000.

By the Associated Press.

WARSAW, Poland, Dec. 15.—The Polish Telegraphic Agency says Poland will not pay the debt installment due today. A note has been sent to Washington. Non-payment has become so much a matter of course that the Polish press has ceased to comment on it.

ALEXANDER BISCHOFF DIES; BANK DIRECTOR, SPORTSMAN

Head of Westover Nurseries Ill Since Last May, When He Underwent Operation.

Alexander Bischoff, president of the Westover Nurseries and a director of the Manchester Bank of St. Louis, died last night at his home on Kent road, in Ladue Village. He was 45 years old, and had been ill since last May, when he underwent a brain operation at St. John's Hospital.

Mr. Bischoff was formerly vice-president of the Independent Packing Co., founded by his father in 1904. He resigned when the company was reorganized in 1931. He was a member of hunting, fishing and shooting clubs.

Surviving are his wife, Mrs. Emma Bischoff; two daughters, Mrs. Kramer Weissenborn and Miss Marie Bischoff; two sisters, Mrs. Charlotte Cross and Miss Lillian Bischoff, and his mother, Mrs. Gustave Bischoff.

consequently did not hesitate to make it as full-blown as possible. Tschaikowsky's busy orchestration was never busier. Mr. Golschmann not only gave one the full benefit of the many primary colors, dynamic and rhythmic contrasts and straight-from-the-heart melodies, but called on the inner voices to add their exigent eloquence more plainly to the chorus. For those who liked Tschaikowsky it was certainly a field day. For those who did not it was still a splendid example of high pressure orchestral playing.

The tone of the orchestra had more depth and natural warmth than at any performance this season. Mr. Stagliano's horn solo, however, was somewhat below the standard set up by the other sections. His tone was interesting but he was not close enough to a true legato for this familiar tune to make its usual effect on the bemused Tschaikowskyites.