

## RACHMANINOFF PLAYS WITH THE SYMPHONY

Pianist, First Soloist of Season,  
Performs Own Concerto  
No. 3.

By THOMAS B. SHERMAN.

THE St. Louis Symphony Society presented its first soloist of the season yesterday afternoon at the Municipal Auditorium in the impressive person of Serge Rachmaninoff, who, with the support of Vladimir Golschmann and the orchestra, played his own piano concerto No. 3 in D Minor. Mr. Rachmaninoff certainly needs no introduction to St. Louis or to any other musical community and the best generalization that can be made about his performance is that it varied in no essential particular from what one might have expected.

The younger and sometimes more dazzling virtuosi have never encroached on Rachmaninoff's eminence for the reason that none of them can play in the romantic manner and carry the same conviction. To be able to give one's self over to a full, unstinted emotional utterance is not so rare as the ability to surround that quality with complete dignity. Such is one of Mr. Rachmaninoff's outstanding virtues. His tone is full-bodied, his style is free and the emotional stress behind it all is qualified by nothing tentative or reticent. But it never has the effect of being excessive. He means what he says, obviously, and he says it with eloquence and authority.

The only exceptions that can be taken to yesterday's performance are that it sometimes lacked precision and, in the light of Mr. Horowitz's treatment of the same music, was not so galvanic in the third movement as it might have been. The second exception, of course, is a matter of preference.

A more important exception has nothing to do with the performance which was an outstanding one by both the soloist and the orchestra. It involves the music. One excepts to the rule that Mr. Rachmaninoff must always play his own compositions. Even those with a taste for Rachmaninoff's kind of romantic pessimism might like an occasional opportunity to hear him play a concerto by Brahms or Beethoven, for instance.

Mr. Rachmaninoff seemed reluctant to give an encore and the audience did not insist.

The Haydn Drum Roll Symphony, which was the other major offering on the program, had, as usual, the clear, unmistakable impact of genius. Its graceful proportions seemed as artlessly and as effortlessly contrived as its unaffected good spirits. One knows of course that behind all that apparent spontaneity was one of the most resourceful and disciplined minds in the history of music. But knowing that, one was still at ease in its presence—free to enjoy to the full all its melodic, harmonic and rhythmic inventiveness.

The performance by Mr. Golschmann and his colleagues was admirable in every respect. It was substantial in texture without being massive, lively without being aggressive, fluent, well balanced and finely modeled. The slightly reduced body of strings was warmer and more plastic than ever and Scipione Guidi, the concertmaster, gave a thoroughly appealing quality to his solo in the slow movement. It is to be hoped that Mr. Golschmann will make this symphony a number to which he will periodically return.

The afternoon's proceedings began with a lusty performance of Weber's "Der Freischutz."