

MUSIC

By Richard Aldrich.

The National Symphony Orchestra.

The National Symphony Orchestra had, as it has not too often had since its career began and not nearly as often as it has deserved, a very large audience for its concert last evening in Carnegie Hall. Experienced observers might attribute this in large part to the fact that Mr. Rachmaninoff was the soloist, playing his own third concerto. But no doubt it was due also in part to the fact that Mr. Mengelberg put upon his program for the first time in New York the suite that Richard Strauss has made from his incidental music to Molière's play, "Le Bourgeois gentilhomme."

The history of Strauss's music for Molière's play is somewhat complicated, the outcome for practical purposes is this: out of nine numbers, with titles referring to their place in the play, but all of them wholly enjoyable by themselves. It may be observed that the actual production was given in 1912, that there was revision and remodeling, and that Strauss made the suite for concert performance in 1918. It thus appears that the music was composed before some of the inferior recent productions of Strauss's music.

Having swollen the modern orchestra to its greatest dimensions, Strauss in this work suddenly reduces his forces to thirty-six, calling, for instance, for only six violins but also making demands for a variety of baroque instruments and so forth. His marvellous facility in instrumental combination has not deserted him and his score is full of the most ingenious and surprising effects of contrast with the effect of chamber music in a larger scale.

He has written also a charming polka for orchestra that has seemed exhibited in so many of his later compositions for the operatic and concert stage, or else he has taken the trouble to invent melodies that have a value in and of themselves and are not merely spurious material for development and combination. Not that there is not an endless amount of that sort of thing in the score; Strauss still remains the consummate fugger with notes, even while he is apparently bent on more serious things, and to meet quite just what its quality as a farrier. Thus he undertakes to imitate in the seventeenth century the two violins, one being "The Strife of Italy." But gracious are Strauss does not seem to put in a note without some considerable reason, and he is not in his habit.

But of course there is no reason why Strauss should laboriously try to take himself back two centuries and a half, and he is no means unskilful in it. The spirit and charm of the overture depend much on the individual character that Strauss has put into it, including some uncompromising modernities. The section called "The Evening Masquerade" is full of witty characterization. As to the "court" movements of the "Tales from Hoffmann," with the final before which the "courante" is a modern version of the old dance and of the old elaborate instrument. In part at least, Strauss is nothing more than a composer who has measured up the modern world to the sound and emblematic of the spirit of the galanterie of the period, sentimental, delicate, and so forth.

The three tableaus are more modern. Here some have found a reminiscence of Bizet's "In the Forest" and some the blending of the story in Strauss's own "Last Waltz," when the mutton is passed. The "Hunting Song" and the "Hunting Song" are not so obvious. The concert is suggested by the solo and the orchestra. The close of the "Le Bourgeois gentilhomme" puzzles Mr. Gilliam, except the choruses changed for mutton, but that several bellows of mutton suggested by the beating brass.

The music looked on the whole with its difficulties and complications was a pleasure to an appreciative audience. There was the regular flow of suggestion and light in the performance, well as a fully humorous approach to the farces in the cheek of the composer that is not always absent. The music has a certain farce, and some decoration that is essential to its meaning, and this Mr. Mengelberg might.

The program opened with four movements of Mozart's "Haffner" symphony. Mr. Mengelberg was blessed with small opportunities, getting into the heart of the composer as symbolically as one could expect. His playing of the first movement was a performance finely decorated with a certain farce, and some decoration that is essential to its meaning, and this Mr. Mengelberg might.

Erno Dohány's Recital.

Erno Dohány, the Hungarian pianist, gave his second recital yesterday afternoon in the Town Hall, an excellent hall for piano recitals and a job and comfort to the audience. He began with the "Hungarian" Op. 10, a piece that asks no special attention to the form of the piece with ground bass and is full of every felt and thought. He played two sonatas of Beethoven, the first of which is the "Sonata in C major" Op. 28, No. 2, and the second of which is the "Sonata in G major" Op. 28, No. 3, and the interpretation of the works in their dramatic spirit, being, perhaps, inspired.

He presented four short pieces of the composer, the "Hungarian" of which he has one, the "Bear Dance," seemed to be familiar. It is not so modern, but that he has musical links to express even of the expression takes a certain confidence and freedom. There have been many worse modern pieces than the "Bear Dance" and the "Allegro Moderato" produced even here. In fact, it is both the "Minor Intermezzo" and the "Gigue" in minor. He played "The Dohány's" and a trifling bit of "The Dohány's" that seemed quite new to him. He closed with Schubert's "Sonata."