

## SYMPHONY CONCERT

By Wilson G. Smith

Practically every seat in Masonic Hall was occupied at the symphony concert Thursday night, due undoubtedly to the appearance of Rachmaninoff, distinguished Russian composer-pianist, and his reception was a royal one when he appeared to play his concerto with the orchestra.

The program opened with Brahms' third symphony, a work that we have not heard in repetition until it has become hackneyed as some might mention, and while it did not receive the finesse of detail that other works have, nevertheless it was given with a fine spirit and approximate disclosure of its emotional and structural contents.

The rendition was of brilliant character, so much so that the audience clamored until the orchestra rose in acknowledgment. The symphony is based on strong melodic lines, and this fact is not lost sight (or hearing) of, despite the elaborate contrapuntal development.

It carries out, somewhat enlarged, the Beethoven traditions, never transcending the limitations of agreeable sound; as opposed to the cacophonous disturbance indigenous to the ultra-modern school of "decomposition."

### Choirs Show Harmony

Of particular interest—and likewise well played—were the "Andante" and "Allegretto" movements, in which the several choirs in contrasted coloration projected a fine blend of tone.

Two Nocturnes of Debussy—"Clouds" and "Festivals"—received a splendid impressionistic interpretation and rendition. Personally, I am not overfond of Debussy.

His themes impress me as being empty and devoid of character or impressiveness, and his harmonic progressions seem far fetched. However, there are those who admire him, and with them I will have no argument.

That his weirdness is suggestive and atmospheric can not be denied, but his music impresses me as purely cerebral and decadent.

Nobility of utterance, like Brahms, is not his manner of expression. His music does not assail the heart; it only causes surprise and awakens possible admiration. He was evidently guided in his lucubrations by the imp of the perverse.

### Rachmaninoff at Piano

Expectation was on the qui vive when Rachmaninoff appeared at the piano to play his concerto, and an impressive silence prevailed before the first chords were struck.

To say that he fully sustained his reputation as a pianistic virtuoso is mildly stating the facts. His concerto is a succession of technical problems that only a master technician can encompass.

Cast in somber color the work does not strike one as being of engaging melodic interest. The first movement seems overly orchestrated, to

the detriment of the piano.

The "Adagio" movement affords the pianist greater opportunity to indulge in tonal painting, and Rachmaninoff made the most of it. The finale, with its marked rhythm and accentuation, was brilliantly played with true virtuoso effect. I must confess that Rachmaninoff's playing did not impress me as it did in his recital.

It savored too much of mere virtuosity such as any eminent pianist would display.

### Individuality Lost

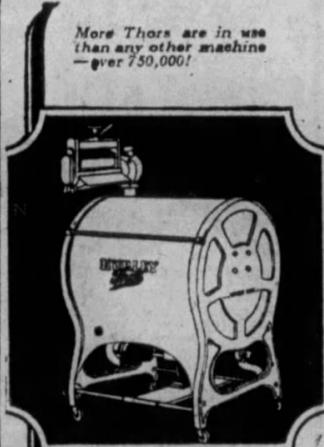
The intimate individuality was lost in the technical pyrotechnics the concerto demanded, but which were played with impeccable surety and abandon. Rachmaninoff in recital is a personality unique and sui generis; as a concerto player he joins the horde of virtuosos who amaze us with their digital dexterity.

During the intermission Andrew Squire took possession of the stage and in a fulsome address descanted upon Mrs. Hughes' success as the founder of the orchestra and a purveyor to the musical interests of the city.

For 25 years she had ministered to our musical delectation until the orchestra became her crowning achievement, and in behalf of the Musical Arts Association, Mr. Squire took great pleasure in presenting Mrs. Hughes with a loving cup.

The cup was accepted with becoming grace and modesty by Mrs. Hughes, with a happy response, and when the numerous floral tributes had been removed from the stage and quiet had been restored, the concert went on its brilliant way.

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