

PHILADELPHIA ORCHESTRA

A Russian Program Conducted by Sergei Rachmaninoff

The Philadelphia Orchestra was heard at the Academy of Music yesterday afternoon in a program exclusively consisting of Russian music, the interpretation of which had befittingly been committed to the assisting artist of the occasion, Mr. Sergei Rachmaninoff, whose appearance in this city earlier in the season in association with the Boston Symphony Orchestra, many concert goers of this locality will pleasantly remember.

Mr. Rachmaninoff's own symphony No. 2 in E minor, op. 27 was the principal feature of the musical scheme which had been arranged for the occasion, and whatever misgivings its announcement may have provoked, in view of the infrequency with which symphonies of contemporary origin are found to be sympathetically impressive, were quickly dispelled as the performance of this particular work proceeded. It proved to be extremely interesting and enjoyable. It is full of ingratiating thematic material whose exposition is in a high degree effective, and although it played for nearly an hour it did not weary the attention which it invited and compelled. Its composer handles the orchestra with masterly skill, and the manner in which he developed his ideas and worked up from one climax to another along lines which were strewn with striking modulations and bizarre yet not discordant combinations, was exceedingly original and noteworthy.

There is not a great deal of the distinctly Slav element in the symphony, which plainly betrays the influence of Brahms, but there are feeling and melody and creative power and the evidences of a highly cultivated mind and of an essentially poetic imagination. It is in four movements of which the first, in which an opening *lento* is followed by an *allegro moderato* is the most elaborately constructed, and the second, a brilliant, scintillant, highly vitalized *allegretto scherzando* is the most immediately attractive, and throughout its length it is not often that listening becomes a conscious effort. Perhaps the slow movement might in places be advantageously abridged, which is not infrequently the case with slow movements, but upon the whole it may be said of the symphony that it was interesting from start to finish, and it is certain that most of those who heard it will be glad of a chance to hear it again.

The rest of the program comprised three of Rachmaninoff's preludes, those in D major, G minor and C sharp minor, which Rachmaninoff played with a simplicity and a moderation of emphasis which probably much surprised some amateur pianists present, and a fantasy by Modeste Moussorgsky called "A Night on Bald Mountain." Mr. Rachmaninoff conducted with a clear beat and without any exuberances of movement and the orchestra followed his lead with fidelity and ability and appreciative zeal. Altogether it was a most excellent concert, and tonight when the same program will be repeated the audience should be large.