

STAGELAND GOSSIP.

The fifth concert by the Cincinnati Symphony Orchestra, under the direction of Leopold Stokovski, took place yesterday afternoon in Music Hall. With Rachmaninoff as soloist the following program was rendered:

Symphony in C, No. 7.....Schubert
Piano Concerto in C-minor, No. 2.....Rachmaninoff

Overture—The Flying Dutchman....Wagner

There is one tendency more marked than any other in the readings Stokovski ventures, and that is a persistent inclination to hurry things. It is growing to be a mania, which is always a dangerous condition. We may refer to individuality and the uselessness of metronomic determination of time, but there is no gainsaying the fact that certain limits are prescribed by the very nature of a composition, and to override these is to destroy the character of the work. The C-major symphony of Schubert suffered considerably on this account yesterday at the hands of Stokovski. The whole performance appeared restless and lacking in poise. The finale of the first movement, the greater part of the second movement, and especially the last movement, were taken in a manner which, at least to our ear attuned to a classic interpretation, seemed unduly hurried. As a result most of the beauties of the work were lost, while those parts which have shown the unmistakable wear of time were all the more glaring. There was also a lack of poetic sentiment in the reading, and by sudden transitions in dynamic treatment, especially the prominence allowed the trombones in the final movement, the performance was made uneven and stilted.

In addition to all this, which is a question of personal choice, the wood-winds were badly out of tune. The weather may have had something to do with this, but the same excuse cannot be volunteered for Stokovski's interpretation of the symphony. There were a number of very healthy and beautiful moments in the performance, particularly the beginning of the andante and the third movement as a whole. Here Stokovski was at his best, and the orchestra, too, played well. But, to conciliate most of the tempi—well, perhaps we are too conventional. At any rate, no one who is honest can claim that Stokovski's reading added anything to the work. And while the C-major symphony is one of noble conception, it is not likely to maintain its position as long as the "Unfinished." Therefore, its beauties must be given their fullest value and the imagination and deeper sentiment of the conductor must revivify it, so to speak, in order to reach the highest plane. This Stokovski did not succeed in doing yesterday.

On the other hand, a truly noble impression was made by Rachmaninoff, the eminent Russian composer, who was the soloist and who played his own C minor concerto. To begin with, the work is one of exalted beauty and musical worth. The second and third movements are especially fine, and the whole reflects an intensely musical nature. Not only is it well written for the piano, though not especially showy, but it is splendidly and effectively scored. It has a distinct note and, among newer concertos, there is none heard here in years which can claim the same permanent worth. Its first and second movements might have been written by a German, but the rugged and sweepingly magnificent finale is genuinely Russian. It has none of the bizarre affectation or saccharine melancholy; but rather exemplifies the proud, strong and powerful spirit of the race.

Rachmaninoff played it superbly. He is a dignified and earnest pianist. There is no unnecessary display nor manneristic interruptions. He undertakes his task manfully and sincerely, and, as his playing progressed and the beauties of the concerto were unravelled, none could escape the complete and masterly grasp he had of every detail. In conjunction he it said that Stokovski accompanied him in a splendid manner. It was a fine example of ensemble and deserved the enthusiastic applause of the audience. As an encore Rachmaninoff played his popular C sharp minor prelude. Every pianist ought to hear him play it. It sounds so different.

The program closed with a fairly good performance of the "Flying Dutchman" overture. The same program will be repeated to-night.