

**THE PHILHARMONIC SOCIETY'S
CONCERTS.**

PART I.
Overture—"Barber of Baghdad".....Grieg
Suite in B minor for trio and strings.....Bach
Song—(a) "The Wals Fens" (a young girl dead).....Hamilton Harty
(b) "Al Ban".....Hamilton Harty
Miss Agnes Nicholls (Mrs. Hamilton Harty).
Piano-forte Concerto No. 2 in C minor (Op. 18)
M. Rachmaninoff.
PART II.
Poem—"With the Wild Geese".....Hamilton Harty
Chorus—(a) "The Blue Bird".....Stanford
(b) "O gladsome light" (Golden Legend).....Sullivan
(Conducted by Mr. Harry Evans.)
Piano-forte Solo—(a) Prelude in E major (Op. 23)
(b) Prelude in G major (Op. 24)
(c) Prelude in G minor (Op. 24)
M. Rachmaninoff.
Irish Country Song—(a) "She moved thro' the fair"
(b) "I know my love"
(c) "A Ballynure Ballad"
Arr. by Herbert Hughes
Miss Agnes Nicholls (Mrs. Hamilton Harty).
No. 2—Overture in F major (Op. 9).....Svendboen

A mood of miscellaneous modernity had evidently inspired the selection of Tuesday evening's programme. Whether it had been intended that the modern or the miscellaneous note should be dominant, one could hardly decide; but there can be no hesitation in confirming that, excepting the Rachmaninoff numbers, the chief impression induced was a sense of scrappiness not entirely stimulating to the highest artistic ideals. How Bach's immortal suite came to be included in such quaint company is a puzzle that could not fail to present itself to any inquiring mind. However, there it was, and as ever, and in whatever setting, proved itself a gem of exquisite art. But, of course, it was a Rachmaninoff concert; it was the pianist we all went forth to hear, and his work gave to the whole concert a point and brilliance which seem to make any sort of complaint an act of sheer ingratitude. Nevertheless, who can deny that the programme printed above reads somewhat oddly?

M. Rachmaninoff, either as pianist or composer, is one of the musicians of our day whom it is always good to hear, but it is particularly good to hear him in the interpretation of his own work. One hears various performers recreating, as it were, the great aspirations of other musicians, and one wonders which comes nearest to discovering the meaning of the master, and probably one settles the question by personal bias and without any particular regard to the Master's intention. But when the master interprets his own work one feels the last word has been said, and it is indeed unimaginable that the most brilliant virtuosity could bring more out of the concerto played last evening than was revealed by M. Rachmaninoff's handling of the concerto and the piano-forte solos.

The concerto is a work which it would not be well for any pianist to attempt until technique had been, as it were, forgotten in perfect mastery. Its intricacies are almost beyond comprehension to the mere amateur, and yet, though its surface effects at times command one's entire attention, the work has always an undercurrent of deep poetic inspiration, and at times has about it a haunting reminiscence of Beethoven's Moonlight Sonata, though probably it is a reminiscence for which the mind of the listener was as responsible as the work of the writer himself. In every movement the spirit of romance makes itself continually felt, the adagio, with its united strings and its solemn introduction for strings and wind, its grand, rich, steadily-rising crisis, is intensely interesting and extraordinarily beautiful; and the allegro is an illustration of that brilliant and really majestic tone colouring which it is the delight of the modern composer to attempt and his glory to achieve. The orchestral parts of the concerto were very finely realised by Mr. Hamilton Harty, who conducted last evening, and naturally M. Rachmaninoff's work at the piano was a wonder and a delight to his audience. The solos of the second half of the programme were most exquisitely given, and even the most consistent hater of the encore nuisance could not but be grateful for the persistent recall which gave one more opportunity of revelling in the pianist's delightful virtuosity.

Mr. Hamilton Harty's management of the orchestra was in all cases spirited and successful. But it was not a programme in which a conductor could secure first honours. The Bach suite was well given with refreshing briskness and clearness of phrasing, and due feeling for the freshness and delicacy of the tone scheme. Mr. Harty's own work, "With the Wild Geese," was heard with much enjoyment, though it is not without its occasional languors. Yet the romance and the fragrance of the old Irish folk-music inspires it so continually that the imagination cannot but be stimulated and the emotions touched. The playing of this "poem" was a most vivid piece of orchestral work, and Mr. Harty received warm acknowledgment of his skill both as conductor and composer.

Miss Agnes Nicholls was down for a most interesting and unshakable selection of songs, and, naturally, her singing of those by Mr. Hamilton Harty were heard with quite unusual interest and enthusiasm. The choir (conducted by Mr. Harry Evans) gave a good account of themselves in the choruses selected.