

TOSCANINI GIVES HIS FINAL CONCERT
Great Italian Conductor Leads La Scala Orchestra in a Remarkable Program

Arturo Toscanini and La Scala Orchestra gave the Philadelphia audience last evening before an audience which was not large in numbers, but was strong in its appreciation of the work of the great Italian conductor and his men. The orchestra played in some ways better and in some worse than on its previous appearances here. There was even more "pop" than before, an ingredient never lacking in anything which Toscanini conducts, but there was less sureness in places, as though the men had tired in their long American tour, as probably they have to a certain extent. For example, in the introduction to the Beethoven symphony the note second violins were a full sixteenth note apart in their first ascending phrase; the second time it occurred it was played correctly. On the other hand, there were many times when the orchestra rose to very great heights of tone color and ensemble playing.

As to the orchestra itself, considered abstractly, the strings have the Italian quality of tone, which is not so brilliant as that of the best American orchestras. The wood winds fall into the same classification, beauty of tone, without being the end sought for and achieved. In our own orchestras this is demanded. The brass had little to do, but did it well. But the whole is used all the time as the means of expression of Toscanini and never for what it can do tonally.

The program opened with three Italian dances, arranged and orchestrated by the composer, Respighi, whose tone poem, "The Fontana di Roma," produced so tremendous an impression at the first concert of La Scala Orchestra. The concert of La Scala Orchestra, the dances are good musically, but the arrangement and orchestration entirely eclipses the original composition. Respighi, although little known in this country, stands as one of the leading lights of the neo-Italian school.

The Beethoven symphony was a characteristic Toscanini reading, especially in the tempo. Mr. Toscanini has never been accused of taking anything too slowly, and this was the case with the Seventh last evening. The scherzo was taken at a very rapid tempo, and the trio of it faster than has been heard in Philadelphia in many years. In the lovely allegretto there was a decided lack of the legato style, which classicists of the past have taught us to believe is an essential. In the last movement he used four trumpets, instead of two, as the score calls for, with the result that the brass overblasted the thematic part of the score, which is first in the strings and second in the horns, neither of which could be clearly heard. This is not to say that Mr. Toscanini did not have a right, although little known in this country, stands as one of the leading lights of the neo-Italian school.

In the Brahms variations the same characteristics were in evidence. Mr. Toscanini sought contrast in tone color whether the composer had this effect in mind and rhythm and achieved all of them. But in the symphonic poem of De Smet, composer and conductor were in accord. Mr. Toscanini is doing a great work in making known the compositions of the modern Italians, which, under his baton, get a more sympathetic reading than would be possible under any other conductor. The composition resembles closely the early Brahms; there is the same melodious faculty, boldness of harmony and mastery of orchestration which the German composer showed in his student days. At the same time the work is palpably immature and strictly personal in thought. The concert closed with a stirring rendition of the "William Tell" overture.

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