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**QUEEN'S HALL.****RACHMANINOFF.**

It was an exceptionally large audience that came to Queen's Hall yesterday afternoon to welcome Mr. Rachmaninoff on his return to London after an absence of some two or three years. One likes to think that the majority of those who attended his recital were there out of respect for the distinguished Russian's undeniably sterling gifts as a pianist, and were not merely drawn by the magic of a name indelibly associated with one of the most hackneyed pieces in modern piano literature. But it may almost go without saying that Mr. Rachmaninoff was not allowed to leave the platform until, at the close of a long and sufficiently exacting programme, he had played the inevitable C sharp minor Prelude. The first half of the programme was given up exclusively to Chopin, beginning with the Fantaisie in F minor, and ending with the B flat minor Sonata. The pianist's readings of Chopin are familiar enough by now, and one experiences, no doubt, in listening to them that he feels all the poetry inherent in the music of that composer, and has at command all the resources to express its changing moods. If there was a fault to find in his particular—but on the whole traditional—views, it lay in a tendency to linger unduly over certain passages. The extremely slow tempo adopted, for instance, in the earlier phases of the Fantaisie, had the effect somewhat of sentimentalising the music where, but for that tendency, the playing, which was beautifully clear-cut and full of sensitiveness, would have laid itself open to no such reproach. In the performance, always thoughtful, and often eloquent, of the Sonata, we enjoyed nothing better than the scherzo, the opening subject of which, like the Waltz in A flat, which had preceded the larger work, was played with a compelling sense of its rhythmic opportunities. But, even a desire for an effective dynamic contrast, seemed hardly to justify the almost aggressive return the pianist made to the theme of the funeral march after the trio. Save, however, for a few details here and there as to which it was not altogether easy to share Mr. Rachmaninoff's views, his recital was fraught with pleasure, and, for many of his hearers no doubt, the pleasure was nowhere keener than when he interpreted the Studies of his own, typical of varying moods, which were included in the second half of the programme. Incidentally, his brilliantly effective arrangement of Moussorgsky's Hopak was played with a deftness and élan that made an encore inevitable, while the technical mastery shown in the performance of Liszt's "Rhapsodie Espagnole" compelled admiration.

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