

RACHMANINOFF'S NEW WORK.

MASTERFUL PLAYING.

A fine programme was performed by the London Symphony Orchestra at Queen's Hall last night—by way of overture, a Haydn Symphony; by way of finale, the "Enigma" Variations, each played with more sensitiveness than this orchestra has exhibited since its "no deputy" system came into operation. The conductor was Albert Coates, the soloist Sergei Rachmaninoff, whose new Concerto for Piano and Orchestra was the central work of the evening.

Among contemporary composers Rachmaninoff occupies a curious, almost unique, position, not unlike that of Medtner, to whom this concerto is dedicated. His is the kind of well-organised music that must always mean more to the composer than to the hearer. His own playing is seductive, conquering the mind through the senses; and the sparkle and brilliance of this particular performance hid rather than revealed the essence of the music. There is something queerly occult about it all, something maybe a little Mongolian; something, at any rate, that defeats analysis—just as the very reserve of the composer-pianist's personality has turned him into a great popular figure.

His own share in this concert was a big one, emotionally, so that fine performances of "Till Eulenspiegel" and the Elgar Variations left one still thinking of Rachmaninoff and his hold upon us.

H. H.