

## MUSIC IN LONDON

### Rachmaninoff and Beecham

LONDON, SATURDAY.

Rachmaninoff remembers that in the "seventeen-nineties" Beethoven was a popular virtuoso. He does not confuse the lionised composer-pianist of the close of the eighteenth century with the brooding lion of the late pianoforte sonatas and the posthumous quartets; neither is he of the school which seeks to read Schopenhauer into Chopin. So he played Beethoven's First Pianoforte Concerto this afternoon at the Queen's Hall with the sympathetic understanding of a fellow-composer-pianist. Anatole France said that it is the critic's duty "to think himself into the state of the creator's mind in which each work of art was conceived."

This is equally the interpreter's duty, and Rachmaninoff fulfilled it admirably in his performance. He played with the virtuoso's delight in beauty and variety of tone, in accuracy and grace of execution, in giving pleasure to his audience, and he was rivalled, aided, and abetted in the friendliest way by Sir Thomas Beecham and the London Philharmonic Orchestra. Only careful and understanding rehearsal can produce a frame and background of the confident unanimity within and before which the participants are free and safe generally to compete in exquisite nuancing of phrasing and accent. The collaboration was no less happy in Rachmaninoff's own "Rhapsody on a Theme of Paganini." There is subtle and unfortunately rare pleasure in observing two fine minds exercised in the performance of concertos.

Beecham and his orchestra also played Haydn's B Flat Symphony (No. 102) and Sibelius's "Tapiola," each with a peculiar understanding of the antithetical styles. The colour and character of the orchestral tone in the two works was as different as eighteenth-century Vienna from twentieth-century Finland.

W. L.