

RACHMANINOFF & BEECHAM

A PRINCE OF PIANISTS

By RICHARD CAPELL

The Beecham-Rachmaninoff concert at Queen's Hall on Saturday consisted of two parts, classical and modern-romantic, each containing an orchestral and a concerted work. The hall was sold out.

The applause for the conductor no doubt included congratulations on his recovery from illness, but it was not excessive simply as an acknowledgment of the exceptionally beautiful and highly-finished performances the London Philharmonic Orchestra gave of a Haydn symphony and Sibelius's "Tapiola." And the accompanying was very fine.

Mr. Rachmaninoff played Beethoven's concerto in C, No. 1, and later on his own Variations on a theme by Paganini. The former represented Beethoven in Slavonic disguise—not showy, but subtly non-classical. The great pianist assumed the right, as virtuosos of the past mostly used to do, of freely modifying Beethoven's dynamic directions. There was no cadenza played in the first movement, though the composer left a choice of three, of one of which Tovey has said that it makes the best reason for the revival of the concerto.

COMPOSER AND SOLOIST

Rachmaninoff's variations (on the same theme as Brahms's Paganini variations) afforded scope for the display of all his wonderful mastery. That lordly ease of his which takes everything so simply in its stride is unique to-day. His set of variations is more like a repertory than a composition, but when he himself is the soloist there is an integrating factor in the dignity of his style, never sentimental or merely showy.

The greatest music of the afternoon was Haydn's 102nd Symphony in B flat, a work that makes the listener say that, though other musicians may have composed as well, none has ever composed better. Beecham unfolded the romantic panorama of "Tapiola" with astonishing spirit and effect. The impetuosity seemed reckless, and yet the utmost delicacy and clearness were retained.