

MASTER PIANIST AT QUEEN'S HALL RACHMANINOFF RECITAL

Sergei Rachmaninoff gave a second recital at Queen's Hall on Saturday afternoon, the programme consisting of Bach's Italian Concerto, Beethoven's sonata in C minor, Op. 111, Schumann's "Phantasiestücke," groups by Chopin and Liszt, and the artist's own "Etude-Tableau" in A minor.

It is futile to discuss the technical merit of Mr. Rachmaninoff's playing, for the whole world knows him to be a, if not the, master pianist. The usual attributes, such as touch, rhythm and clarity, the use of the pedal and so on, habitually singled out for praise or criticism of a pianist, can simply be taken as impeccable and left at that. Nobody, I verily believe, could play the piano better than Rachmaninoff; so why not admit it?

There remains only the question of the interpretation of the music, necessarily a matter of opinion and taste. It may well be imagined, for instance, that certain lovers of Beethoven may have found Rachmaninoff's handling of Op. 111 excessively fluent, giving little idea of the hidden volcano that is in all Beethoven's later music.

But that is merely a case of their opinion against Rachmaninoff's, with the probability of Rachmaninoff, in view of his eminence, not only as a pianist but as a composer, being right. For my part, I can but chronicle an impression that the "Presto" of Bach's concerto, the "Fabel" movement of the "Phantasiestücke," the A minor and the C minor Chopin Studies were the high-lights of the programme.—F. T.