

**RACHMANINOFF RECITAL.****Great Russian Composer's Musical Treat.**

Rachmaninoff's visit to Guildford on Monday was one of the most interesting musical events for many years, and his recital will not be quickly forgotten by those who had the pleasure of hearing him. There were very few vacant seats in the Borough Hall, and it was soon quite evident that the large audience thoroughly enjoyed and appreciated the works and playing of the composer-executant. Although only forty years of age, Rachmaninoff has established himself as the greatest of the younger generation of Russian composers, and he probably follows Tchaikowsky as the master musician of that country. On Monday his programme consisted solely of his own works, and consequently no opportunity was given of judging his capacity as an interpreter of the music of other masters. It must, however, be granted that he has wonderful powers as an executant, in addition to a genius for composition. Practically all Rachmaninoff's works are of considerable difficulty, and are characterised by rushing chord passages which require brilliant execution to achieve any degree of success. The composer played all these difficult movements in an impassive manner, yet with great power and faultless touch. He seemed to dislike applause, for he invariably cut it short by playing a few chords preparatory to proceeding with his next piece. In addition to his wonderful technique, a feature of his playing was the use he made of the pedals in the control of tone colour.

The programme opened with his second piano Sonata in B flat minor, Opus 36, which throughout bears the impress of his big personality. In the first movement—Allegro moderato—one heard the familiar chord passages faultlessly played, while the oft-recurring theme of weird beauty was handled with brilliance and resource. The slow movement struck a pathetic note, while the closing portion, Allegro moderato, was almost in the form of a triumphal song.

**THE FAMOUS PRELUDE.**

The second group consisted of six short pieces, including the celebrated Prelude in C sharp minor. This has become a stock piece of almost every pianist, and one hears it "played" at picture palaces, by pianolas, and by orchestras everywhere. But to hear it by its creator was both a pleasure and a revelation. Often the piece is treated as a display of fireworks, a chaos of crashing chords. There certainly was the frenzied working up to the climax, but the first movement was quietly played. It came as a surprise, however, to many who had read that a regretful spirit permeated the work to hear the last portion played at such a speed. At the conclusion of this piece there was a decided outburst of applause, and this time Rachmaninoff gravely bowed his acknowledgments. In the other five pieces the Russian's individuality was continually heard. The Melodie is a work becoming fairly familiar, and in this, as in the Prelude, there is a tremendous climax, followed by a return to the original theme presented in a different manner. The Barcarolle was a fanciful item, while the "Polichinelle" and "Humoresque" were very animated. The third group consisted of five Preludes, presumably so called for want of better names. The first in F sharp minor could as well have been termed a romance, while the others were usually rhapsodical. The last, in G minor, was a riotous composition, and Rachmaninoff had to respond to a vociferous demand by seating himself at the piano again. As an encore he played a charming Polka, composed by his father, and transcribed by himself.

The recital was arranged by Messrs. Clark's, Ltd., of Guildford and Woking, who are to be congratulated upon giving music-lovers such a treat. A Bechstein grand piano was used.