

MUSIC IN LONDON

Rachmaninoff at the Queen's Hall

LONDON, SUNDAY.

Rachmaninoff was not invariably in his best form for his concert at the Queen's Hall yesterday afternoon. He gave the impression of being at times preoccupied and at others as weary of the whole business of concert-giving. It is not unlikely that the mystification of his audience at the end of the first piece on the programme unsettled him. According to the printed programme and the analytical notes he was to have played Liszt's variation, on a theme of Bach, "Weinen, Klagen Sorgen." This work is well known to concert audiences and it lasts about twelve minutes. Rachmaninoff played for about five minutes and then stopped at what appeared to be the end of a variation. The embarrassed silence was relieved by some tentative applause from various parts of the hall. What had happened was that Rachmaninoff had played an earlier form of the variations, unaware of the fact that the programme had made no mention of the fact. In works by Chopin and in short pieces by Liszt he was his incomparable matchless self, swift and sure of finger and wrist, the supreme pianistic poet of our time. Only Debussy's suite "Berga-

masque" seemed strangely to elude him. The execution was flawless, but the music was made to sound as un-Gallic as a performance of "Boris" sung in German sounds un-Russian.

Mozart's "Idomeneo"

At the Twentieth Century Theatre the Falmouth opera singers gave Mozart's opera "Idomeneo," after a fashion—the fashion of amateur performances of grand opera. The writing for the voice in Mozart's operas makes it clear beyond all doubt, even if there were no other evidence that whatever else Mozart may have suffered from his contemporaries he had at his disposal in the Vienna opera singer, of remarkable technique and skill: Benucci, Del Ben, and Aloysia Weber would have been world-famous stars in any later generation. The music of "Idomeneo" cannot make the effect the composer intended unless it is rendered with the assurance, tone, and skill of the professional expert. Nor can the nobility of the work emerge from a production such as it had on this occasion.

W. I.