

HIS FAMOUS PRELUDE

RACHMANINOFF BOWS TO POPULAR TASTE

Rachmaninoff was in Liverpool last evening. He had a huge audience at the Paramount Theatre. He finished with a thing called "Prelude in C sharp minor"—you may have heard of it!

The audience displayed the measure of its musical feeling by accepting the encore with evident rapture, having taken Rachmaninoff's great Beethoven playing with comparative calm. Still, it is rather exciting to see and hear a man who is both a great pianist and a great composer displaying his talents in the one field on the product of his gifts in the other. It doesn't often happen, and we are entitled to make a fuss when it does.

Rachmaninoff, we are told, loathes this particular one of his twenty-four preludes. Why it alone should have become so generally known is one of the mysteries of public taste, but the fact remains that at hardly any concert for years has Rachmaninoff got away without playing this particular prelude. No wonder he sounded a little vicious about it.

There is precious little that need be said of Rachmaninoff at this late date. His programme was not markedly original, and it contained nothing later than his own pre-war etudes-tableaux. He does nothing quite conventionally nor on the other hand in any way that can be called daring; he plays with a somewhat severe reserve and with a dazzling technique that was shown in all its magnificence in his Liszt and Chopin. One feels always conscious that a great musician is at the keyboard. B. M.