

## FAMOUS PIANIST'S

### GENIUS.

### RACHMANINOFF THE CHAMPION OF RHYTHM.

### PERFECT TONE CONTROL.

SERGE RACHMANINOFF, at the De Montfort Hall, Leicester, last night, threw the light of creative musical genius upon the vexed business of piano playing.

It was, in some respects, a highly illuminating light, for we cannot blink at the fact that many great pianists are somewhat intoxicated with the exuberance of their own virtuosity.

The Russian pianist-composer is not in the least like that.

In platform manner he is reticent, not to say disdainful. Seated at the keyboard he is oblivious to all else but the music, and he is never guilty of obtruding his own personality.

#### Harmonic Texture.

The temperamental note is there, of course. Rachmaninoff has his own scale of musical judgments, and it runs in a curiously opposite direction from that of most pianists.

Whereas the normal bias is in favour of accentuating melody and phrasing based upon the melodic line, Rachmaninoff concentrates essentially upon rhythm and harmonic texture. His tone control is a striking feature of his playing.

Phenomenally crisp in his chord playing, he has the power of bringing out any particular note or group of notes with curiously magical effects on occasion.

#### Crisp Certainty.

But the strongest point of his pianism is undoubtedly the crisp certainty and self-reliance of his rhythms.

Having reason to understand through the medium of his own compositions what the word "hackneyed" means, the pianist studiously avoided it in his programme. He introduced a little known example of the middle-period Beethoven in the F sharp minor Sonata, wherein the final scherzo-rondo gave him great scope for his peculiar mastery in distinguishing planes of tone colour.

Of the later music the most striking was undoubtedly the Three Hymns "In Praise of Toil" by Nicolas Medtner. In introducing this work of a neglected compatriot, Rachmaninoff is clearly doing a work which is a pleasure as well as a duty, for his pianism was here in its most virile and animated phase.

#### Personal Music.

It is highly personal music, very similar in its wealth of individuality to the Schumann novelette (F sharp minor) which was also played with obvious delight in its rhythmical freshness.

Partly by reason of his freedom from sentimentality, Rachmaninoff sheds a new light on Chopin. His reading of the scornful dramatic C sharp minor Scherzo was particularly fine, and contrasted deliciously with the suave D flat Nocturne and the pert E flat waltz.

Other items were the fine but little known Tchaikovsky variation in F, and some compositions of his own, including an "Etude Tableau," quite kinematographic in its strong contrasts.

Of course, his encores had to include the famous C sharp minor prelude. That done—and well done—everybody went home satisfied.

C.A.T.