

HIT OF THE HALLE SEASON

Great Ovation for Rachmaninoff

NEW SOLO WORK

RACHMANINOFF scored the success of the season so far as size of audience and duration of applause are concerned when he played the solo part in the first performance in England of his Rapsodie on a Theme by Paganini at last night's Hallé concert in the Free Trade Hall, Manchester.

Both in the sprightliness of his music and the sparkling quality of his playing Rachmaninoff belied the air of rather weary dignity with which he acknowledged the applause.

The Rapsodie is fresh, distinctive and its technical brilliance is obvious even at first hearing.

As one might expect from the pen of a famous pianist, the solo instrument is in command throughout. There are none of the formal alternations of solo passages and *tutti*; the pianist is playing almost continuously, though the orchestral part is much more than a mere accompaniment.

CLEVER TOUCHES

The scoring is spare, but full of clever touches. Rachmaninoff's handling of the strings is particularly noteworthy in his efforts to adapt their tone to the percussive qualities of the solo instrument.

Rachmaninoff's playing made the intricacies of the solo part seem easy, and the orchestra, conducted by Nicolai Malko, handled the unfamiliar score with polish and liveliness.

Malko, as was expected, gave us a splendid rendering of Tchaikovsky's Fifth Symphony, but he was not so successful in the Bach Passacaglia and Fugue in C Minor, transcribed by Respighi.

The discretion with which he handled the brass in the symphony was lacking in parts of the Passacaglia.

P. G. W.