

Rachmaninoff's New Work.

WHEN he wrote his latest work, Rhapsody on a Theme by Paganini for piano and orchestra, Rachmaninoff was, I cannot help thinking, "cocking a snook" at those people who have persistently called him the last of the Romantics. As those who were present at the first London performance at the Queen's Hall last night will affirm, it is quite unlike his usual work. He has taken the theme that was also chosen by Brahms, and given us 24 variations brilliantly orchestrated in the modern manner. One feels rather that he was saying, "See I can do it, too, if I want to."

About half way through he reverts to a good old romantic theme and works it out pretty thoroughly, and then, as if he had been doing it to get his second wind, he returns to more prosaic mood. The result is a work which is vastly entertaining, but one which will probably be neglected while the Brahms variations are still held in high esteem.

The composer himself played the piano part with such fluency that one completely forgot the difficulties with which it abounds. The hall was sold out, and the applause for M. Rachmaninoff was loud and long, even for the Queen's Hall.