

HALLE CONCERTS.

PROGRAMME.

Symphonic Fantasia—"Aus Italien" (Op. 16)..Richard Strauss
 Concerto for Pianoforte and Orchestra, No. 2, in
 C minor (Op. 18)Rachmaninoff
 Two Movements from Concerto in G minor.....Rameau-Mottl
 Pianoforte Solos—
 (a) Prelude in C sharp minor } Rachmaninoff
 (b) Prelude in G sharp minor }
 (c) Prelude in G minor }
 Overture on the Theme of a Spanish MarchBalakirev

With a hall crammed in every part, and with a tremendous spirit of enthusiasm prevailing, the great Russian pianist Rachmaninoff, made his first appearance at a Halle concert last night. There are at least half a dozen pianists, his equals in technique, and a still larger number who have a wider repertoire in piano literature—for Rachmaninoff plays only his own compositions—but we know none with such an impressive personality. We must go back 30 years, to the playing of Rubinstein, for any approach to the spell which Rachmaninoff cast over the audience. From the opening chords of the Concerto, to the fiery ending which brings it to a close, the player never lost his grip of the listener.

The work is one full of poetic suggestions and fancy, but fortunately free from a "programme." There is little of the character of Russian music in it, indeed in many passages the influence of Brahms is hinted at. The soloist played with the greatest freedom and brilliance, and throughout made one realise how powerful an instrument for expression the piano is, when used by a master. The orchestral accompaniments were played with the certainty and refinement which has made this class of work so strong a feature at recent Halle concerts.

In the second part three Preludes in G minor, G sharp minor, and the widely-famed C sharp minor were played. Here again we marvelled at the wonderful tone gradation which is so pronounced a feature of the technique, and which was so strikingly displayed in the extra piece played—a Polka by Rachmaninoff senior, transcribed for concert performances by the player.

The Symphonic Fantasia "Aus Italien" by Richard Strauss is another of the monumental works of our time for which we have long waited, and which we are now hearing, thanks to the expansive policy of the Halle executive and its conductor. This beautiful work stands for the period when its composer was drifting from the old abstract forms into the modern poetic form, and when the imagination of the composer was becoming more emotional. The music throughout is of a broad, vigorous, and lucid type. Everything is clear and well-balanced, and as a revelation of happy, joyous feeling is as fine as anything Strauss has done. It was played by the orchestra in a confident, finished manner, and received with much warmth by the audience.

At next week's concert that greatest of all choral works, Bach's Mass in B minor, will be given.