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ARTUR RUBINSTEIN

Although Rubinstein signs himself "Arthur," the artist was always "Artur" Rubinstein to the late Sol Hurok.

the shape of one. The best thoroughfares were Broadway and Fifth Avenue. The first one was the vital center of New York, a replica of the boulevards of Paris, and the latter had a certain "grand air," thanks to the many palatial structures of the rich, especially where it faced Central Park.

FIRST NEW YORK RECITAL

So far, things had gone smoothly and agreeably; the first week in and around New York had seemed promising, both artistically and personally. Now, I was facing the real start of my American tour, a tour de force in a way, as my contract called for forty concerts in less than three months, which meant one concert every second day. My manager, Mr. Ulrich, had some bad news for me: my two New York recitals were to take place in the afternoon in a theatre that belonged to the Shubert brothers. A musical comedy was playing there with a famous comedian, Eddie Foy, as the star. Ulrich admitted that I would be the first artist to play under such conditions.

"Why make a scapegoat out of me?" I asked. Ulrich answered by giving me a lecture on the musical life in America.

"The main musical interest of this country," he said, "is concentrated in New York and especially in the Metropolitan Opera with its expensive singers and conductors. The other cities, with the exception of Boston, follow New York in all artistic matters. Publicity is the dominating factor in our concert life, and it creates, unfortunately, sensationalism rather than real love for music. As in your own case, pianists are brought to this country by the piano manufacturers only to help promote their instruments. That explains our arrangement with the Shubert theatres. You see, it is very expensive to run concerts in our cities. The Shubert brothers have theatres all over the country and have agreed, on a percentage basis, to let you 'play their circuit,' as they call it, and to assume all the publicity for the tour."

Needless to say, I became depressed by this picture of music in America, and by the prospect of my "circuit." Ulrich noticed it and tried to console me: "Don't be sad," he said, "things are not as bad as they look. We have engagements for you with some fine orchestras in Chicago, Cincinnati and Minneapolis and a recital in Boston in a real hall."

My first recital in New York at the Shubert Theater set the pattern for all the others to follow. At noon, while trying out my piano, I was surrounded by half-dressed chorus

girls who formed a strange background for the Bach Toccata I was rehearsing; unaccustomed to classical music, they kept interrupting me with requests for popular tunes. Some of them were quite lovely, which added to my distraction.

Just as I feared, this theatre was not fit for piano recitals, and my listeners were not musical. They applauded at wrong moments and were bored by long pieces; what they loved best were my short and effective encores. This time the critics were more severe. My loyal followers still praised my talent but found fault with this and that, imputing it to my "visible nervousness."

CHICAGO

As we arrived in Chicago just in time for my rehearsal. Hochman dropped me at Orchestra Hall and took our luggage to the hotel. "Hurry up, everybody is on the stage waiting for you," a house employee shouted, showing me the way. Without losing a second, just dropping my coat and hat on the floor, I struck the first octave of the Saint-Saëns Concerto, and we played the whole piece through in less than a half an hour, with no repeat, no stop. Mr. Frederick Stock, the young conductor, jumped down from the stand and kissed me, and the orchestra shouted "Bravo," a rare tribute at a rehearsal. What impressed them most was the sight of my undaunted energy after the exhausting journey. Nothing is more encouraging for me than the approval of my fellow musicians; my spirits rose.

Chicago had the reputation of being a windy city, and on this day it was bitterly cold. The snow-covered, slippery streets made walking a hazard, and the sharp, icy wind threatened to blow my head off. I had to give up the idea of exploring the city on foot, and I must confess, to my regret, that throughout my tour I had hardly a chance to see anything; we were moving too rapidly from one city to the next, so, except for some special incidents, all I remember are the stations, hotels, and the halls where I played.

That night in Chicago, however, I wouldn't give up. I decided to enjoy my free evening and happy mood. "Let us take a cab and go to a burlesque theatre," Hochman proposed. "You might like it, it is typically American." And I loved it. The burlesque shows were, in the old days, very different from what they are today. They offered a combination of vaudeville, comedy, and operetta with the emphasis on short sketches played by comedians who were often vulgar but always irresistibly funny. Ever since that night I have never missed a "burlesque" if I could help it; my favorites were the comedians Weber and Fields—their antics and their marvelous American slang made me fall off my chair with laughter.

All in all, I am grateful to Chicago. A young Swiss American, Rudolf Ganz, who was successful in America, had warm words of praise for me, and has befriended me ever since. My concert with the Theodore Thomas Orchestra under Frederick Stock was a big and solid success with both the public and the press. The "windy city" remains my faithful friend even as I write these lines.

Despite the strain and the rush of the tour, I enjoyed it more and more. The Shubert theatres in some cities had no shows at the time, so I had the exclusive use of them, and in contrast to New York, they were more open to concerts and the audiences more appreciative of music.

AMERICAN IMPRESSIONS

When an interviewer asked me about my impressions of America, I gave him the usual banal answers: "great country, in full progress, fine hotels, good orchestras, etc.," but I had to think about what my impressions really were, for a long while.

The greatest part of the America which I had seen in 1906 was ugly. With the exception of a few large cities the country presented a drab picture. Most towns had been planned and developed in a hurry; all built after the same pattern. Restful squares with their benches and trees and fountains or parks were practically unknown . . . the open countryside which I was able to observe from my Pullman car windows looked desolate and unattractive. I was appalled by the sight of the long stretches of uncultivated land, by the uninviting forests, and by the heaps of dirt and waste on the outskirts of little towns lying near the railway tracks. My American friends sang the praises of Niagara Falls, the Rocky Mountains, the Grand Canyon, and Florida. I was disappointed in not having seen them, but still they were the work of nature and not of men. On the other hand, I was fascinated by the people in America. The quite recent mass immigration of a mixed variety of Europeans had succeeded in creating a harmonious whole, despite their disparity. Their dynamic will to succeed in their new surroundings was exciting to watch. America was called the land of opportunity, and rightly so. And how I loved their witty and sharp, pointed slang!

Above: Rubinstein in 1937 on his return to America.
Below: On his first American tour, 1906.

My Love of Life

WINTER · BERLIN · 1908

Why did I choose Berlin, of all places? I have tried in vain to find a logical answer to this question. My departure from Warsaw . . . left me in a complete vacuum. One thing I knew for certain: It was impossible for me to return to Paris. Monsieur Astruc had no plans, no concert engagements to offer me. He was frankly disappointed in me and discouraged by my manque de serieux, as he called it, and my nonchalance toward my career . . .

Only when I arrived in Berlin at the old, familiar Friedrichstrasse station, on that cold and windy morning, did I realize that my decision to stay in this city was nothing but a cowardly compromise. The rest of the money I had earned in Poland could last two or three months, depending on my way of living. I rented at a monthly rate a nice room with a bathroom at the Hotel Bellevue, a not very expensive but quite distinguished residence at the central Potsdamer Platz. The owner and director of the hotel loved music, and did not object to my having a piano in my room. The house of Bechstein, the famous piano maker, sent me a baby grand without charge.

I was determined to remain incognito and to try to avoid meeting or visiting any of the old friends whom I had left so abruptly in 1904, especially the ones I liked best. Why I felt that way is difficult to explain. If I remember well, I went through a crisis, a sort of inferiority complex, made up of a mixture of shyness and ambition. My career seemed to have reached a dead point, and I had no valid reason to offer for my presence in Berlin . . .

At this point in my life I wanted simply escape; I seemed to be waiting for something to happen, to wake me from a kind of torpor. My daily routine was simple; I practiced and played a little after breakfast, took all my meals at the excellent hotel restaurant, then strolled aimlessly along the street. If there was nothing new at the theater, I would go early to bed with a book and read late into the night . . .

My career had come to a stop . . . The state of my reserves had become quite alarming; my hotel bills were overdue, and I had only a small sum left . . . The hotel owner sent me a stern letter about my unpaid bill. My credit at the restaurant was canceled, he wrote, and no food would be served in my room unless it was paid with cash . . .

My daily diet consisted now of no breakfast at all, of a wurstel and dry roll at Aschinger's Automat, which cost ten pfennigs (2½ cents), and the same menu for dinner. And the rest of the day? A vague fumbling for some right notes on the piano, a listless wandering along the streets, and a chronic state of despair.

But just at that time a curious phenomenon occurred: every night, the moment I fell asleep, the most fantastic, extravagent dreams invaded my unconscious mind, and in all of them I played the role of a powerful and happy personality. I was recurrently a famous composer, I conducted my new symphony, which was received with endless ovations, or I played my own piano concerto, a most original work. All the beautiful women were at my feet. In other dreams, I fought victorious battles for Poland, I would be saving Jews from persecution, or I was fabulously rich, the benefactor of humanity. My awakening brought the usual painful, tragic contrast, another disagreeable letter from the manager under the door, the hopelessness of the situation, and my empty pocket.

In my distress I decided to accept my dreams as reality and my days as mere nightmares. I tried to sleep as long as I could.

. . . The idea of death by suicide was not novel to me, it had been on my mind before, but from that moment on, I couldn't think of anything else—it became an obsession. There was nothing left for me, life had driven me into an inextricable position. I wanted to die; I was ready for it. But even a decision as final as that had its problems. How to carry it out? I had no arms, no poison in my possession, and the idea of jumping out the window was revolting—I might have to go on living with broken arms and legs. The only thing to do was die by strangulation, to hang myself. Well, on that sad afternoon, left so utterly alone, not even able to think of anyone to write to, I prepared for the finish.

I took out the belt from my old worn-out robe and fastened it with a knot. My bathroom had a clothes hook which was placed high enough to hold me. I pulled up a chair, secured the belt on the hook, and put it around my neck. As I pushed the chair away with my foot the belt tore apart and I fell on the floor with a crash.

If I saw today such a scene on television, I would roar with laughter, but in my role as the living hero of this tragicomedy, my first reaction was a severe nervous shock;

Above: Rubinstein at Carnegie Hall.

I cried bitterly, disconsolately, for a long time, lying where I had fallen, with no strength left. Then, half-consciously, I staggered to the piano and cried myself out in music. Music, my beloved music, the dear companion of all my emotions, who can stir us to fight, who can inflame us in love and passion, and who can soothe our pains and bring peace to our hearts—you are the one who, on that ignominious day, brought me back to life.

When one stops crying, the suffering subsides, the same as when laughter dies, the fun is gone. And so, nature, claiming its own, I began to feel hungry. "This time I shall have two sausages," I decided.

Out in the street, however, a sudden impulse made me stop. Something strange came over me, call it a revelation or a vision.

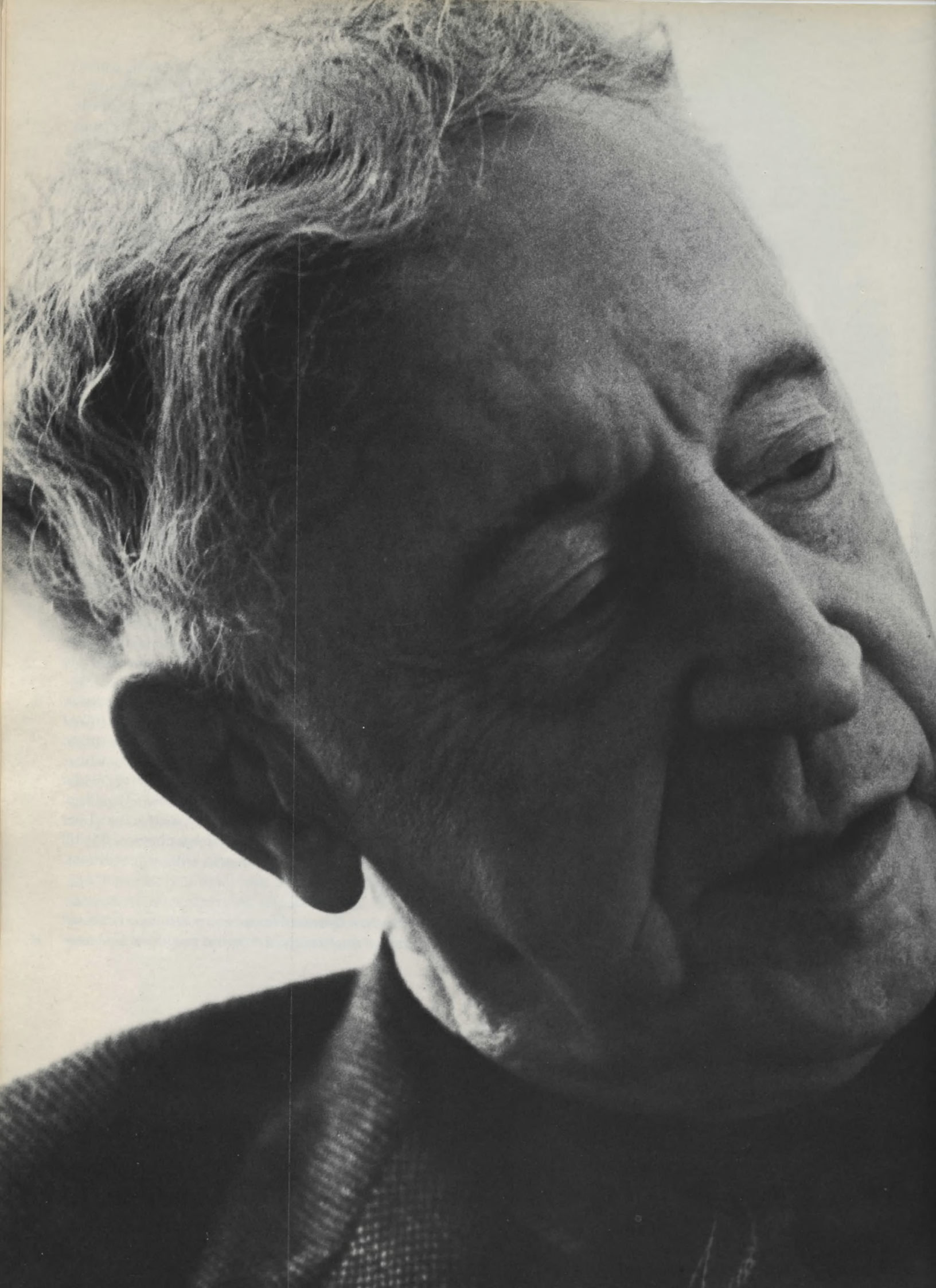
I looked at everything around me with new eyes, as if I had never seen any of it before. The street, the trees, the houses, dogs chasing each other, and the men and women, all looked different, and the noise of the great city—I was fascinated by it all. Life seems beautiful and worth living, even in prison or in a hospital, as long as you look at it that way.

This revelation is easy to explain: in attempting suicide I was completely dismissing the world I was going to leave behind, so no wonder that after my "suicide manque" I felt as if I had been reborn. My "rebirth" brought yet another surprise: it created a revolution in my whole psychic system. I suddenly started to think. The life I had been leading consisted of a series of events for which I had no responsibility; I acted entirely by instinct, following blindly the road drawn out for me by circumstances; I never tried to analyze anything.

Well, on that night, right there in the street, on my way to Aschinger's for my dinner de luxe, my brain was full of philosophical thoughts, and it resulted in a new conception of life and a new criterion of values, all for my private use. The eternal unresolved question—What gave birth to the universe? What is the reason for its existence?—would involve a long dissertation. Let me say only that in this choas of thoughts I discovered the secret of happiness and I still cherish it: Love life for better or worse, without conditions.

SPRING · WARSAW · 1911

My conception of happiness was born on that sad day in Berlin soon after my attempt at suicide. It had been



a sudden revelation, and ever since that time I had learned to love life *unconditionally*.

Most people, in my opinion, have an unrealistic approach toward happiness because they invariably use the fatal conjunction "if" as a condition. You hear them say: I would be happy *if* I were rich, or *if* this girl loved me, or *if* I had talent, or, their most popular "if": *if* I had good health. They often attain their goal, but they discover soon some new "ifs."

We are born into an unfathomable, unaccountable, illogical, absurd, and dangerous world with the unanswered question: Who or what created it and for what ends was it created? As for myself, I love life for better or worse, unconditionally, because in my eyes it is the only modus vivendi.

I remember the charming story of the emperor who was advised by his astrologer to wear a shirt belonging to a happy man. After a long search for such a man, a peasant was found who declared himself to be perfectly happy, but . . . he had no shirt.

Far from me to pretend that I have an exceptional constitution and fortitude, or that I am able to "smile in the face of adversity." On the contrary, I am as much a prey to nervous depressions, to outbursts of anger or impatience, as anybody else, with the only difference being that my subconscious accepts them as a necessary *contrast* to the state of euphoria.

Life can deprive us of freedom, of health, of fortune, of friends, of family, of success, but cannot take away from us our thoughts or our imagination, and there is always love, music, art, flowers, and books. And the passionate *interest* in everything.

It may sound paradoxical that my conscious love of life was really born in Berlin on that unhappiest day of my life.

ARTUR RUBINSTEIN: A TRIBUTE
by the late Sol Hurok

It was during the 1921-22 season at New York's old Aeolian Hall that I first heard Artur Rubinstein. The power of his personality and the sense of grandeur and poetry that enveloped his playing at that first hearing filled me with almost unbearable excitement. I knew that I was in the presence of that rare, unique kind of personality who is instilled with a power of communication which instantly captures and holds an audience.

It has been one of the great pleasures and privileges of my life to have known Artur Rubinstein—the artist and the man—for five decades. I have been his manager for more than three of these.

I wooed Rubinstein that season and borrowed him from his manager for concerts in the New York Hippodrome and in the Academy of Music in Brooklyn and Philadelphia. Now he has become a legend, but at that time he was not really accepted here nor appreciated for the great artist he was. He was not happy here. Already the toast of Paris, London, Rio de Janeiro, and Madrid, he did not return to the United States until 1927, and after that tour, left these shores, expecting never to come back.

From 1928 until 1936 I pursued the pianist across Europe and South America using my not inconsiderable powers of persuasion, but to no avail. Finally in 1936, I convinced him that America was ready for him at last. Artur and his lovely wife, Nela, arrived on the Queen Mary in November of 1937. By the end of the season it was clear that America had taken him to its heart, and he had accepted America. He became a citizen in 1946.

So vivid, so vital, so charming is Artur Rubinstein that it is impossible to describe him adequately. It is really not necessary, for his vast audiences around the world need no description of his personality; it comes overwhelmingly across the footlights to them, in sound, in sight, in aura.

There is something lordly about him on the concert stage. There he is a great gentleman receiving his friends and sharing with them the things closest to his heart. There is something lordly, too, in his bearing everywhere. One instinctively rises when he enters the room. He is well aware of who he is and the effect he has on people, but he also has a marvelous capacity for laughing at himself as well as at the foibles of the world around him. Wherever he is, he is the center of a group listening with rapt attention to his stories.

Rubinstein is one artist, who, despite the strict demands of his art and the deep passion he accords it, is never limited to it. His world stretches out in all directions and his art feeds on that rich world. He is interested in life, people, in food, cigars, painting, politics, literature, philosophy, and conversation. He has deep affection for the many persons to whom he is specially attached. He always has the time to speak at length to his thousands of acquaintances in the eight languages he calls his own. He always takes the time to listen with rapt attention to the young.

His friend Thomas Mann once called him "that civilized man." Sometimes, as I watch Artur moving with such impeccable style and kindness and grace, I think he may be the last of that breed.

Artur Rubinstein: Ambassador at Large

by Irving Kolodin *Music Editor, Saturday Review*

Paul Recital Hall at the Juilliard School was crowded to at least twice its capacity of 278 one afternoon last winter with students standing in the doorways, even gathered in a rear foyer where a public address system had been set up to serve the overflow. As there are less than half that number of pianists in the school, the audience was not made up exclusively of those attracted to hear a famous eighty-eight year old instrumentalist. They were attracted by the opportunity to hear Artur Rubinstein.

That is the profound difference between Rubinstein and almost any other musician now alive. It was a distinction that also applied to such musicians of the past as Paderewski, Kreisler, Toscanini, Casals. They had risen so high in the art of which they were exponents that they were no longer famous merely as a pianist, a violinist, a conductor, or a cellist. They had earned, by popular accalim, the rank of ambassador at large from the court of music to the capitols of the world.

It should be noted that the opportunity offered to the Juilliard students to "hear" Rubinstein was not in his primary identity as a pianist. It was in his newer, more recently public identity of the man of broad humane spirit, of wisdom and insight, known privately to his friends for years. Age alone had not conferred this transformation: a widely shown film, a much read book, have also contributed to it.

Few things in art are more menacing than the artist who becomes an intellectual. It is a happening to be shunned, as may be observed when an actor of parts takes on the role of political pundit or a composer becomes a propagandist for a political system. But an intellectual become an artist? That is another thing. That is the best of possible conjunctions, in which the thinking man and the visionary are mated as they were in Picasso, in Busoni, in Joachim. It is no coincidence that they have all been men in whose orbit Rubinstein's life path was formed. One brief anecdote will suffice. At one time during his close friendship with Picasso, Rubinstein visited him almost daily, and observed that he painted and repainted two objects: a guitar and a bottle. This repetition puzzled him, and he wondered whether his great friend had run out of inspiration. One day he gathered the confidence to question Picasso on this repetition. The answer was clear and convincing: "It is never the same twice. The light is different. I am different. It is always new."

How long Rubinstein has carried with him the impulses and motivations which have made him the particular ambassador at large he now is was revealed to me in September 1974. It was the year of the first International Piano Master Competition established in his name, and he visited Israel (as I did) to participate in the judging of the contestants.

No head of state could have been more honorably received at the King David Hotel in Jerusalem. Any gathering he attended became a tour of triumph. Indeed, rather than Rubinstein visiting Israel, it seemed that Israel was visiting Rubinstein. The cheers that arose when he first came into the hall where the competition was being held prompted a typical Rubensteinism. "I love to be applauded," he said cheerfully, "for doing nothing."

It was in quite another mood that he responded to the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy Honoris Causis bestowed on him by the Hebrew University in Jerusalem. To the surprise of some what he had to say primarily concerned his father. "He lived his life in Poland" said Rubinstein at one point "in the hope of going one day to Jerusalem. I cannot tell you what it means to me to receive this honor from you. I accept it in the name of my dear father."

Motivations? Impulses? The visit to Israel in 1974 included a round of appearances in the halls and institutions which are the visible signs of Israel's commitment to the arts and sciences. These included not only the Hebrew University but the Jerusalem Theater (where the early stages of the competition were conducted), the Frederick Mann Concert Hall in Tel Aviv and the Binyanei Ha'ooma in Jerusalem where its final, public concerts took place. Artur Rubinstein's part in the creation of these institutions and monuments dates back for decades, even before the state of Israel existed. It was in 1926 that he first journeyed to what was then Palestine, to play a concert in a tent pitched on the sands where Tel Aviv now stands.

When all the stars are in proper position at the time of birth, men of thought and vision can also be men of warmth and laughter. When the decision of the jury in the lengthy competition had been rendered, Rubinstein thanked them for a verdict both honest and fair, then announced: "Tomorrow night I am inviting all of you to dinner. What is the best place in town? I want to spend some of my own money" (a reference to the status of all, during the competition, as guests of the government).

The place was found, the time set. The host arrived, inevitably dapper, with his beaming wife a picture of fashion. There were perhaps thirty or thirty-five people present: the twelve judges, some with wives; administrative personnel of the competition; a few privileged persons of Israel's mu-

sic community. Not to be omitted was Arturo Benedetti Michelangeli, the great Italian pianist who had come to Israel to give a recital in homage to the competition, and to take part in the final phases of the judging.

The guests were seated at two large, parallel tables, Rubinstein at the head of one, with Michelangeli as guest of honor at his left. What did they talk about? Fees, perhaps, or fingering. In any case, I couldn't report because I was seated at another table six or eight feet away with my back to Rubinstein. I do know that whatever was being discussed, it had a lot to do with wine and laughter. I was suddenly attracted in their direction when a person across the table from me said, in some alarm: "What on earth is going on? What's happened to Rubinstein?"

I turned to look. Rubinstein had seemed to shrink to half his size, his head and shoulders barely above the level of the table.

"Nothing to worry about" reassured a close friend of Rubinstein, well-acquainted with his repertory of anecdotes "He's just doing his imitation of Vittorio Emmanuel III" (the diminutive King of Italy during Mussolini's time).

It would be a mistake to assume that Rubinstein's concern for things other than music making are centered in Israel. It is, of course, a community to which he has long felt a special attachment. But it is also a fact that, in one series of recitals in Carnegie Hall more than a dozen years ago, all the receipts above expenses were divided among a dozen charities of all descriptions and several denominations in appreciation for the good things America has given to him since his first visit seventy years ago. And he now and then participates in auditions and clinics for young musicians, as he did in Alice Tully Hall early in 1974 on behalf of The American Music Scholarship Association.

As Rubinstein is now an American citizen, it might be supposed that he is an Ambassador at Large on our behalf. But he has, during his long eventful life, traveled on a variety of passports, including one—when Poland was under Russian domination—which was specially created to give him diplomatic status "on a mission of art for Poland." In the course of his Juilliard appearance, it became clear to me that Rubinstein is an Ambassador at Large—very large—on a mission of art to all those who cherish what music represents, inlcuding some who aspire, one day, to enjoy equally honorable citizenship.

He occupied the stage alone for the better part of an hour and a half, first in an informal discourse, in which he

Above: At La Scala, Milan.
Far right: Mr. and Mrs. Rubinstein.
Bottom, left: At the Juilliard School, demonstrating a point to American Music Scholarship winner, Thomas Roberson.
Bottom, right: Rubinstein receives an Honorary Doctorate at Yale University, at the same time as John F. Kennedy.

spoke without notes, and then in a question and answer session. As is customary with him, he spoke whatever was in his mind, but not without relevance to the surroundings. In the company of fellow musicians, some of them as talented as any the world now knows, he spoke, naturally, of the artist and the artist's career.

I took some notes, though I wouldn't try to reproduce, in sequence, exactly what he said. But what he was clearly trying to tell them, in essence, was the function and mission of the artist. "We are specialized people" he said at one point "We are the intermediaries between the great composers and people who do not know how music is made. Those who have talent are the links between an understanding of music and those who know nothing of how it comes about. The great men of the day when I was growing up—such men as Ysaye and Busoni—they were such intermediaries. To perform this function you must love the audience, love to play for them, to share with them what you know and have in your heart, and to give them an experience they will remember."

And, speaking as one who knows to the many who would like to find out, he said—perhaps in recollection of his experience with Picasso—of interpretation: "To me, the interpretation of music is like painting a picture—three or four painters can look at the same object, perhaps a landscape, and each one will see something different. So it is with music. It is never the same twice. Schubert talks to me differently than to Horowitz or to Richter (who may be the greatest pianist alive) . . . I give back what Schubert says to *me* . . ."

In the course of the question and answer period, Rubinstein made reference to a panel discussion in which he had participated not long before in California. "They were all very learned men" he explained "Doctors of philosophy, scientists, physicists, psychiatrists . . . I don't know why I was invited, but there I was . . . After much discussion of society, and sociology and physiology, I had a question to ask. I said 'You are men who know all about the mind, the body, about anatomy . . . Perhaps you can answer a question which has bothered me for years. It is: "Where is the soul located?" 'You know,' said Rubinstein to the audience 'among all those learned men nobody could give me an answer? But where would we be without it?"

Wherever the soul is, Rubinstein has one which has served him, and us, extremely well, these many years.

Artur Rubinstein's career has mounted and mounted to the point where many consider him the greatest living all-around pianist: an artist at home with Beethoven, a Chopin player in the great tradition, a specialist in Spanish and impressionist music. He is an extrovert who loves people, loves life and loves to play the piano. All this comes out in his interpretations. And none but an artist in love with the concert platform would push himself so hard. Rubinstein was over seventy years old when he gave a marathon of ten Carnegie Hall recitals in one season. He gave the series because in 1961 he was entering what he considered his twenty-fifth American anniversary. It was on November 21, 1937, that he made his grand re-entry into New York. Up to then he had never been a headliner in America, though he had played here off and on since 1906. He himself has explained the relative failure of his early tours. "When I was young," he once told an interviewer, "I was lazy. I had talent but there were many things in life more important than practicing. Good food, good cigars, great wines, women. . . .When I played in the Latin countries—Spain, France, Italy—they loved me because of my temperment. When I played in Russia there was no trouble because my namesake Anton Rubinstein, no relation, had conditioned the audiences there to wrong notes. But when I played in England or America they felt that because they paid their money they were entitled to hear all the notes. I dropped many notes in those days, maybe thirty per cent, and they felt they were being cheated." In those years Rubinstein was unperturbed. "To hell with the German pianists and their exact fingers. Temperament! I was spoiled and I admit it. But as I have never played in Germany since 1914 I have at least escaped their criticism."

A natural pianist with the hand of a natural pianist (Broad palms, spatulate fingers, a little finger almost as long as his middle one, a mighty stretch that can take in a twelfth: C to G), Rubinstein found that he did not have to work too hard. He memorized almost instantly and practiced very little. When he had to give a recital he would give the music one quick look. "I couldn't sit eight, ten hours a day at the piano. I lived for every second. Take Godowsky. I was awed. It would take me five hundred years to get that kind of mechanism. But what did it get him? He was an unhappy, compulsive man, miserable away from the keyboard. Did he enjoy life? It made me think a bit."

But in the early 1930s Rubinstein went through a period

An extrovert who loves to play the piano....

by Harold C. Schonberg

of soul-searching. "Was it to be said of me that I *could* have been a great pianist? Was this the kind of legacy to leave to my wife and children? He started working intensively. He also started his great series of recordings, a series that not only was eventually to take in Chopin virtually entire, but large segments of Beethoven, Schumann, Liszt, Brahms and the impressionists; chamber music from Beethoven to Fauré; and substantially the entire active romantic concerto literature. When he did return to America in 1935 it was as the giant he could have been from the beginning. To overflowing temperament was added discipline. Color, technique and a fine musical mind he always had.

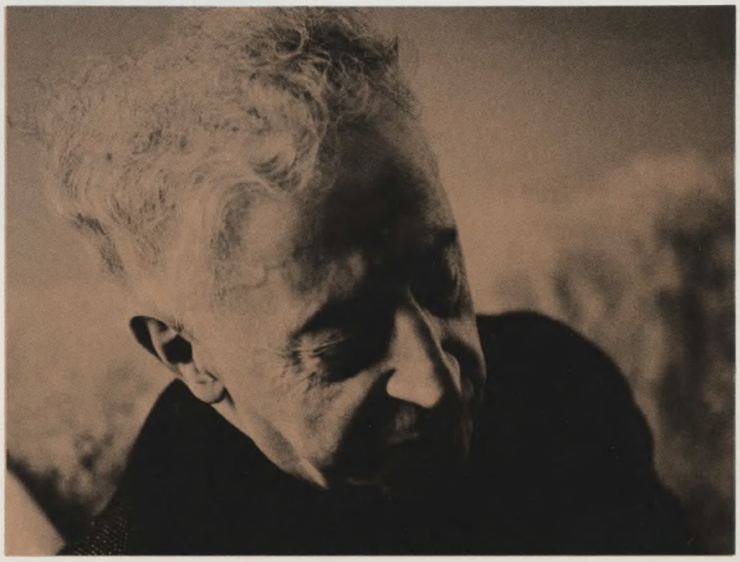
He is, and always has been, the romantic pianist *par excellence*—but the modern kind of romantic pianist. Bach and Mozart play relatively little part in his repertoire, though in recent years he has turned more and more to the Mozart piano concertos. Of Beethoven, his recitals take in the sonatas through Op. 81a. From there the whole world of piano music seems to be at his disposal. And he treats that world like a *grand seigneur.* More than any contemporary pianist's, Rubinstein's playing reflects a culture, and exuberance, a sheer healthy masculinity and athleticism, that must make him the despair of all competition. Romantic as it is, it is entirely unmannered, and almost always true to the text. And it is playing expressed in a gorgeous tone, with bigness, sanity, directness and emotional clarity.

Considering the generation in which Rubinstein was reared, his respect for the text and his direct rhythm are all the more a miracle. When he was born the pupils of Liszt and Leschetitzky had taken over, and the playing he heard in his formative years had a great deal of exaggeration and distortion. Liberty was the order of the day, in the name of "expression" It was a wonderful age of piano playing, but not an age that would be accepted today. Somehow Rubinstein avoided the prevailing anarchy. He developed into a romantic pianist who consistently avoided the meretricious elements of romanticism and retained all that was good. He never breaks a line or bends a rhythm; he has sentiment without sentimentality, brilliance without nonsensical virtuosity; logic without pedantry; tension without neurosis. And he has musical curiosity, though in the last part of his career he has left the new music to the younger men. As a youth in Paris he flung himself into the modern school. In 1904 he was playing Debussy and being hissed for his trouble. Throughout the next two decades he interested himself in composers like Prokofieff, Ravel, Stravinsky, Dukas, Villa-Lobos and others, to his great artistic satisfaction and to the distress of his finances.

The directness of his musical approach sounds so inevitable that one wonders why most pianists cannot duplicate it. But style is, after all, the man. Rubinstein as a man is polished, witty, highly intelligent, probably emotionally uncluttered. As the man, so his music. His Chopin playing—and he is the greatest living Chopinist—unfolds with suavity, poetry and aristocracy, and above all, with ardor. It is all the more poetic because Rubinstein never feels the need to prove something to himself and his audiences, or to counterfeit an emotion he does not feel. In his Chopin are none of the artificialities, stresses, underlinings, frigidity or hysteria that make so much contemporary Chopin playing unsettling.

It is interesting to note that in his early years Rubinstein came under the same kind of attack as did Hofmann for his Chopin playing. Both artists threw over the romantic excrescences and adopted toward Chopin a much more direct approach. In 1960, on the occasion of the Chopin sesquicentennial, Rubinstein wrote an article for *The New York Times* about his development as a Chopin player:

. . . I heard quite a bit of Chopin during my childhood in Poland—mazurkas, polonaises, nocturnes, the whole beloved repertoire. All of it was played interminably, and most of it badly. Why badly?



In those days both musicians and the public believed in the Chopin myth, as do many people today. That myth was a destructive one.

Chopin, the man, was seen as weak and ineffectual; Chopin the artist as an irrepressible romantic—effeminate if appealing, dipping his pen in moonlight to compose nocturnes for sentimental young women.

Pianists whose heads were filled with such nonsense had to play Chopin badly. . .

At my next recital (about 1902) I included Chopin and I presented him nobly, I hoped, without sentimentality (sentiment, Yes!), without affection, without the swan dive into the keyboard with which pianists customarily alerted the audience to the fact that they were listening to the music of Chopin.

What was the result of what I considered conscientious work? My interpretations were adjudged "dry" The audience and critics, it turned out, preferred the "good old Chopin" they knew from before—the mythical Chopin.

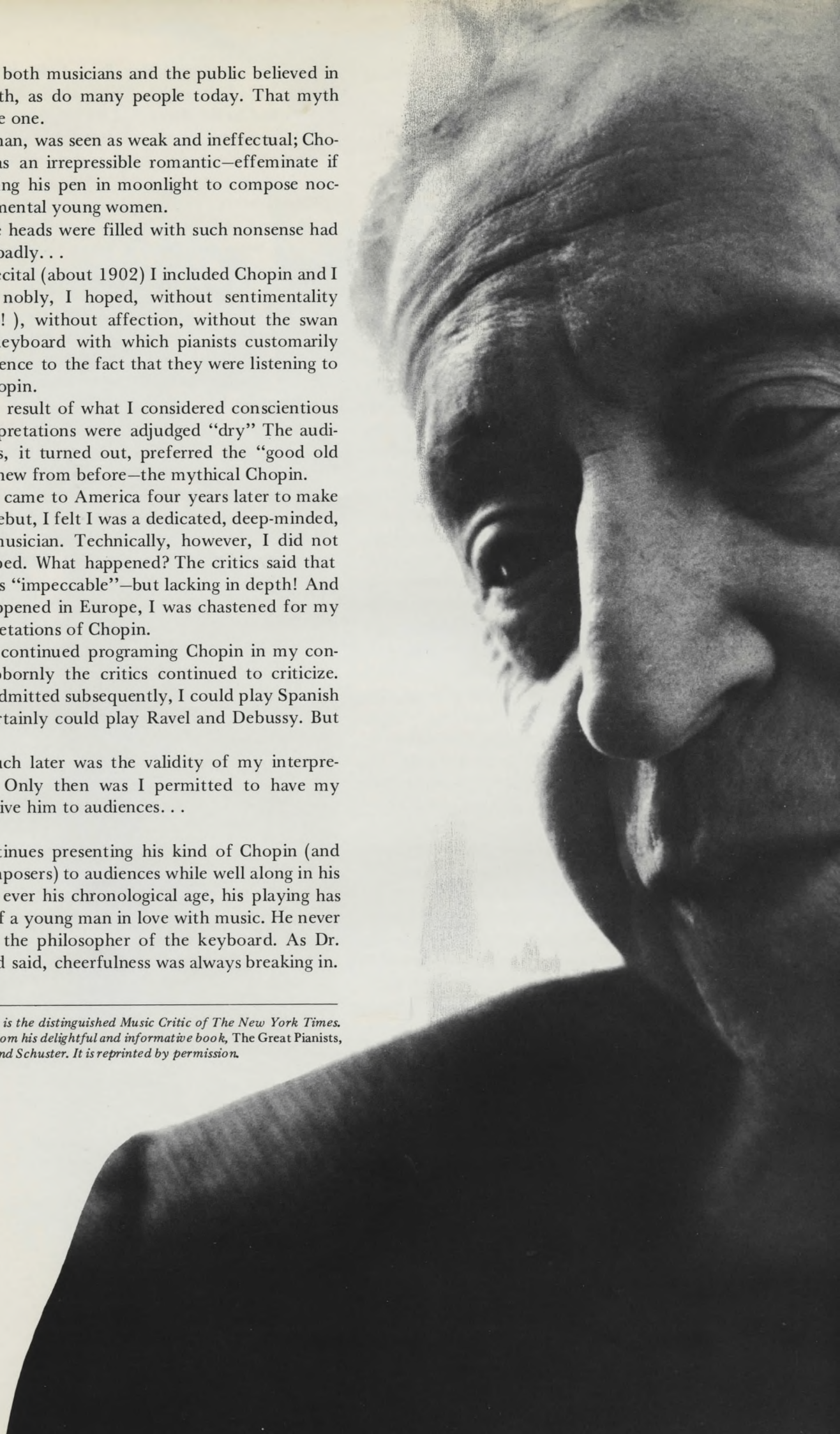
By the time I came to America four years later to make my New York debut, I felt I was a dedicated, deep-minded, well-educated musician. Technically, however, I did not feel well equipped. What happened? The critics said that technically I was "impeccable"—but lacking in depth! And also, as had happened in Europe, I was chastened for my "severe" interpretations of Chopin.

Stubbornly I continued programing Chopin in my concerts. And stubbornly the critics continued to criticize. Oh, yes, it was admitted subsequently, I could play Spanish music, and I certainly could play Ravel and Debussy. But Chopin? No.

Only very much later was the validity of my interpretation granted. Only then was I permitted to have my Chopin and to give him to audiences. . .

Rubinstein continues presenting his kind of Chopin (and many other composers) to audiences while well along in his seventies. What ever his chronological age, his playing has remained that of a young man in love with music. He never developed into the philosopher of the keyboard. As Dr. Johnson's friend said, cheerfulness was always breaking in.

Harold C. Schonberg is the distinguished Music Critic of The New York Times. This article is taken from his delightful and informative book, The Great Pianists, *published by Simon and Schuster. It is reprinted by permission.*



It is hard to believe that it is twenty years since I heard Artur Rubinstein give an historic series of five concerts in which he played seventeen concertos in less than two weeks. I remember going directly from school to the Carnegie Hall box office after seeing the first announcement of the series —to discover that the only remaining seats were in the last row of the balcony. But even to one seated so high and far from the Carnegie stage these concerts made an extraordinary impression.

They were of course a remarkable confirmation of Artur Rubinstein's generosity. He was not satisfied with playing two or even three concertos in one night; on two occasions he played four.

Anyone who hears and sees Artur Rubinstein is aware that the concerthall is his home, that we in the audience are

his honored guests, and that he is the host par excellence who cannot do enough to please his guests. Nothing is kept back; nothing hoarded. The music he interprets with genius and love is a legacy of man's noblest dreams that he delights in sharing with us.

And so it has been for every audience who has heard Rubinstein play. It seemed incredible to me back in February 1956, as it has ever since, that in a world in which there is so much bleakness, selfishness, ugliness and despair, Artur Rubinstein has never dropped the torch of human aspiration. He has cheered, comforted and enlightened us not only with his matchless artistry but with his unquenchable joy, courage and optimism.

The 70th anniversary of his American debut is a cause for rejoicing. –ROBERT KIMBALL

Artur Rubinstein was born in Lodz, Poland on January 28, 1887, the youngest of seven children.

Artur displayed his musical talent at an early age and to such an astonishing degree that his uncle wrote to Joseph Joachim, the great Hungarian violinist and friend of Brahms. Joachim urged that his formal training not begin before he was six, but expressed a willingness to see young Artur if a way could be found to bring him to Berlin.

By a stroke of luck, Artur's sister was going to Berlin to order a trousseau for her marriage and took her prodigy brother to be presented to Joachim. He told Artur's family that when the time came for Artur to begin serious study, he would assume responsibility for the boy's artistic education.

When he was seven Artur took part in a charity concert in Lodz and soon after he went to Warsaw and began his studies with Prof. Rozycki. Within a short time he was back in Berlin under Joachim's tutelage.

At eleven he made his formal debut in Berlin, playing Mozart's A major Concerto with Joachim conducting. By the time he was sixteen young Rubinstein had played in much of Germany and Poland, including Warsaw where he performed with an orchestra conducted by Emil Mlynarski (whose daughter Aniela, as yet unborn, would marry Rubinstein years later). Joachim also sent his young charge to visit Paderewski who was so enchanted with the youth's ability that he prolonged Artur's stay with them for three months.

After a stint in Paris under the guidance of impressario Gabriel Astruc, Rubinstein came to America in January 1906, under the auspices of piano manufacturer William A. Knabe. His first American appearance was with the Philadelphia Orchestra at Carnegie Hall on January 8, 1906. During his first American tour, which lasted three months, Rubinstein gave over forty concerts. Then his career temporarily lost momentum and for a number of years engagements were few and hard to come by. Gradually his fortunes improved as he studied, broadened his repertoire and hurdled "the greatest obstacle in the path of a prodigy, that of shedding my immaturity."

He concertized extensively throughout Europe in the years prior to World War I, playing in Moscow and also in St. Petersburg where he performed Anton Rubinstein's Concerto in D Minor with Serge Koussevitsky conducting. It was at a later concert in Kiev that Vladimir Horowitz, then a small boy, first heard Rubinstein play.

By 1914 he had finished a tour of most of the major cities on the Continent, winding up in London just as war broke out. Although he wanted to join the Polish legion, his knowledge of languages (he speaks eight fluently—English, Polish, German, Russian, French, Italian, Spanish and Portuguese) made him more valuable at Allied headquarters in Paris as an interpreter. He remained there for several months, eventually playing a series of thirty joint concerts with the celebrated violinist, Eugene Ysaye, for the Allied front. A witness of the havoc caused by Germany among noncombatants, Artur Rubinstein vowed never to play in Germany again. He has kept that oath.

In 1916 he began his lifelong love affair with Spain, where his mastery of the music of Falla and Albeniz evoked national acclaim. During the 1916-17 season he remained in Spain to give over one hundred concerts. He followed this success with an extensive tour of South America, so that he did not reach the United States again until 1919. It was at this point, he relates in his autobiography, that "my young years were over. From then on my life changed color and moved forward at a steady pace."

Though Rubinstein had appeared frequently in the United States prior to 1927, he did not visit this country again for a decade thereafter, when Impresario S. Hurok persuaded him to return.

Meanwhile in 1932 he had married Aniela Mlynarski at a fairy-tale wedding in London attended by celebrities in music, art, literature and diplomacy. His daughter, Eva, was born in Buenos Aires in 1933; his son, Paul, in Warsaw in 1935; Alina and John Arthur, in Hollywood in 1945 and 1946 respectively.

When war came and the Germans entered Paris to take over his lovely new home on the Avenue Foch, the European chapter of his life was closed temporarily. A short time later, he settled in Hollywood.

In 1946, the most international of all living artists, friend of royalty and toast of their courts, Rubinstein became a U.S. citizen. A sincere and passionate believer in democracy, he is prouder of the simple document that officially makes him an American than any decoration or citation he has ever received.

Mr. Rubinstein has been honored on numerous occasions by governments, civic groups, grateful citizens and universities. The French Government conferred upon him the Medal of Arts and Letters. He is also a Commander of the Legion d'Honneur, a Commander of the Order of Leopold

1975—
Corrected
& attached

A Biography

Above: Rubinstein in Lodz, looking at the house where he was born.
Far right: Mr. and Mrs. Rubinstein with their children: John Arthur, Paul, Alina and Eva.
Bottom, left-to-right: Rubinstein in 1891, 1897, 1906, and 1937.

II and of the Order of Leopold I, of Belgium, Commander of the Order of Chile, Grand Officer of Alfonso XII of Spain, Benemerenti of Roumania, Officer of Santiago of Portugal, oldest military order on the Continent, Officer of Pologna Restituta, Correspondent Member of Academy of Arts of Brazil, and Honorary Member of the famous Academia di Santa Cecilia in Rome. The Royal Philharmonic Society of London conferred upon him its gold medal. The cities of Florence and Venice honored him in 1952; shortly afterwards Brown University and Yale University conferred honorary doctorate degrees upon him. At Yale, he was honored at the same time as President Kennedy. He holds an honorary degree from Northwestern University, and in May 1975 received an honorary doctorate from Columbia University.

Since World War II Rubinstein's career has been an almost uninterrupted series of world triumphs. His recitals, orchestral concerts, recordings, film and television appearances have been heralded everywhere and have made his name virtually synonomous with the instrument of which he is acknowledged master.

In 1954 he recovered his home in Paris. In 1965 he purchased a summer home in Marbella on the Costa del Sol. Mr. and Mrs. Rubinstein now divide their time between the United States and Europe.

Rubinstein's performances on his 1975-76 North American tour coincide with the seventieth anniversary of his American debut.

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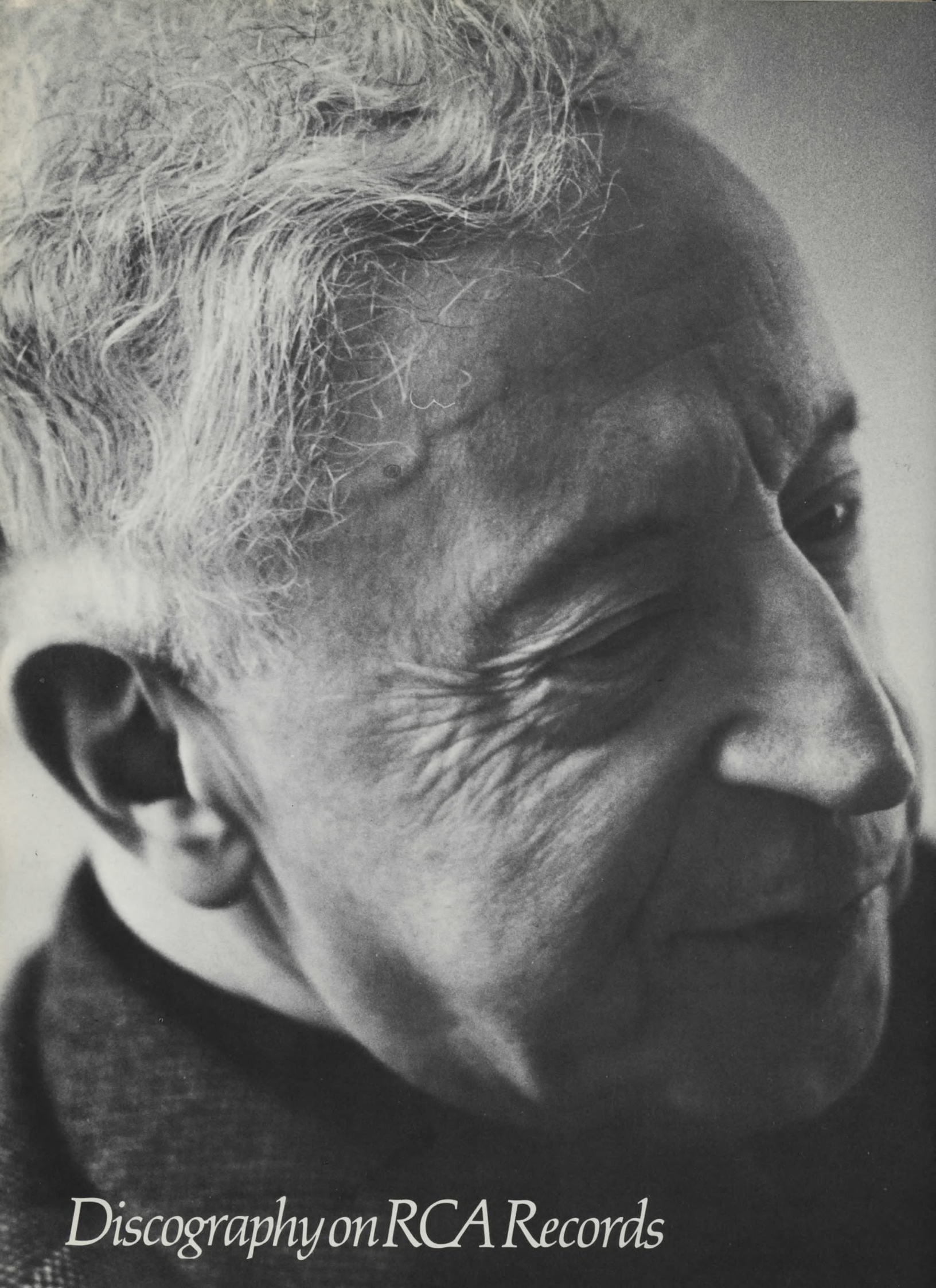

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Brahms: Sonata No. 1 in G, Op. 78
Szeryng, Violinist
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Sonata No. 8 in C Minor, Op. 13 ("Pathetique")
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Chopin

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Wallenstein, Symphony of the Air
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LSC-3194

Waltzes
No. 1 in E-Flat, Op. 18 ("Grande valse brillante"); No. 2 in A-Flat, Op. 34, No. 1 ("Valse brillante"); No. 3 in A Minor, Op. 34, No. 2; No. 4 in F, Op. 34, No. 3; No. 5 in A-Flat, Op. 42 ("The Two-Four Valse"); No. 6 in D-Flat, Op. 64, No. 1 ("Minute Waltz"); No. 7 in C-Sharp Minor, Op. 64, No. 2; No. 8 in A-Flat, Op. 64, No. 3; No. 9 in A-Flat, Op. 69, No. 1 ("L'Adieu") (Posth.); No. 10 in B Minor, Op. 69, No. 2 (Posth.); No. 11 in G-Flat, Op. 70, No. 1 (Posth.); No. 12 in F Minor, Op. 70, No. 2 (Posth.); No. 13 in D-Flat, Op. 70, No. 3 (Posth.); No. 14 in E Minor (Posth.)
LSC-2726/ Tape R8s-1071

The Chopin I Love, Vol. 1
Polonaise in A-Flat, Op. 53; Waltz in C-Sharp Minor, Op. 64, No. 2; Nocturne in F-Sharp, Op. 15, No. 2; Mazurka in D, Op. 33, No. 2; Ballade in G Minor, Op. 23; Waltz in A-Flat, Op. 34, No. 1; Nocturne in E-Flat, Op. 9, No. 2; Fantaisie Impromptu in C-Sharp Minor, Op. 66; Waltz in D-Flat, Op. 64, No. 1 ("Minute"); Nocturne in D-Flat, Op. 27, No. 2; Polonaise in A, Op. 40, No. 1 ("Military")
LSC-4000/R8S-1172/RK-1172

The Chopin I Love, Vol. 2
Waltz in E-Flat, Op. 18; Nocturne in A-Flat, Op. 32, No. 2; Mazurka in B-Flat, Op. 7, No. 1; Scherzo in B-Flat Minor, Op. 31; Ballad in A-Flat, Op. 47; Mazurka in A-Flat, Op. 59, No. 2; Berceuse in D-Flat, Op. 57; Waltz in A-Flat, Op. 42; Waltz in A-Flat, Op. 69, No. 1; Waltz in E-Minor.
LSC-4016/R8S-1236/RK-1236

The Chopin I Love, Vol. 3
Waltz in A-Flat, Op. 34, No. 1; Nocturne in B, Op. 32, No. 1; Mazurka in B Minor, Op. 33, No. 4; Waltz in A Minor, Op. 34, No. 2; Scherzo No. 3 in C-Sharp Minor, Op. 39; Andante spianato and Grande Polonaise in E-Flat, Op. 22; Nocturne in F Minor, Op. 55, No. 1; Mazurka in A-Flat, Op. 50, No. 2; Waltz in G-Flat, Op. 70, No. 1.
LSC-3339/R8S-ARS1-0858/RK-ARK1-0858

The World's Favorite Chopin
Polonaise in A-Flat, Op. 53; Waltz in D-Flat, Op. 64, No. 1; Nocturne in E-Flat, Op. 9, No. 2; Mazurka in D, Op. 33, No. 2; Waltz in C-Sharp Minor, Op. 64, No. 2; Fantasie Impromptu in C-Sharp Minor, Op. 66.
LSC-3322/R8S-1302/RK-1302

Dvorak

Quartet in E-Flat, Op. 87
Members of the Guarneri Quartet
LSC-3340

Piano Quintet in A, Op. 81
Guarneri Quartet
LSC-3252

Falla

Nights in the Gardens of Spain
Jorda, San Francisco Symphony Orchestra
Rachmaninoff: Rhapsody on a Theme of Paganini, Op. 43; Reiner, Chicago Symphony Orchestra
LSC-2430/ Tape R8s-5035

Nights in the Gardens of Spain
Saint-Saëns: Piano Concerto No. 2
Ormandy, Philadelphia Orchestra
LSC-3165/R8S-1165/RK-1165/RQ8-1165

Faure

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Guarneri Quartet
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Symphonic Variations
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Wallenstein, Symphony of the Air
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LM—Monaural LP/**LSC, LDS**—Stereo LP/**R8S**—Eight-Track Stereo Tape Cartridge/**RK**—Cassette

Grieg

Concerto in A Minor, Op. 16
Orchestra conducted by Wallenstein
Favorite Encores
LSC-2566/ Tape (Grieg only) R8s-1011

Concerto in A Minor, Op. 16
Orchestra conducted by Wallenstein
Highlights from Rubinstein at Carnegie Hall
Tape R8s-5009

Concerto in A Minor, Op. 16
Rachmaninoff: Rhapsody on a Theme of Paganini, Op. 43.
Reiner, Chicago Symphony Orchestra
LSC-3338/R8S-1315

Haydn

Andante and Variations in F Minor
Mozart: Concerto No. 20 in D Minor, K. 466
Orchestra conducted by Wallenstein
LSC-2635

Liszt

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Wallenstein, RCA Victor Symphony Orchestra
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Reiner, Chicago Symphony Orchestra
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LM-1905

Sonata in B Minor
Schubert: "Wanderer" Fantasy
LSC-2871

Mendelssohn

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LM-1119

Mozart

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Schubert: Impromptus, Op. 90: No. 3 in G; No. 4 in A-Flat
LSC-2636

Concerto No. 20 in D Minor, K. 466
Orchestra conducted by Wallenstein
Haydn: Andante and Variations in F Minor
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Concerto No. 2 in C Minor, Op. 18
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Rhapsody on a Theme of Paganini, Op. 43
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Jorda, San Francisco Symphony Orchestra
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Ravel

Trio in A Minor
Mendelssohn: Trio No. 1 in D Minor, Op. 49
Heifetz, Violinist; Piatigorsky, Cellist
LM-1119

Saint-Saëns

Piano Concerto No. 2
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Ormandy, The Philadelphia Orchestra
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"Wanderer" Fantasy
Liszt: Sonata in B Minor
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Fantasiestucke, Op. 12
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Favorite Tchaikovsky Concertos
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Heifetz, Violinist
VCS-7086

Trio in A Minor, Op. 50
Heifetz, Violinist; Piatigorsky, Cellist
LM-1120

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Favorite Encores
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Orchestra conducted by Wallenstein
LSC—2566

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Valse nobles et sentimentales, La vallée de cloches (Ravel); Mouvements perpetuels, Intermezzo in A-Flat (1944), Intermezzo No. 2 in D-Flat (Poulenc); Nocturne in A-Flat, Op. 33, No. 3 (Fauré); Dix pieces pittoresques (Chabrier); Scherzo-Valse
LSC-2751

Highlights from Rubinstein at Carnegie Hall
La Cathedrale Engloutie, Poissons d'Or, Hommage à Rameau, Ondine (Debussy); Four Mazurkas, Op. 50 (Szymanowski); Twelve Visions Fugitives from Op. 22 (Prokofieff); Prole do Bebe (Villa-Lobos)
LSC-2605/ Tape R8s-5009

Trios—Beethoven, Brahms, Schubert
Beethoven: Trio in B-Flat, Op. 97 ("Archduke"); Brahms: Trio in B, Op. 8; Schubert: Trio in B-Flat, Op. 99
Heifetz, Violinist, Feuermann, Cellist
LM-7025

Three Favorite Romantic Concertos
Tchaikovsky: Concerto No. 1 in B-Flat Minor; Grieg: Concerto in A Minor; Rachmaninoff: Concerto No. 2 in C
VCS-7070

The World's Favorite Concertos
Tchaikovsky: Concerto No. 1 in B-Flat Minor; Franck: Symphonic Variations
LSC-3305/R8S-1285/RK-1285

Ten Great Piano Concertos
Mozart: Concerto No. 21; Liszt: Concerto No. 1; Grieg: Concerto in A-Minor; Beethoven: Concerto No. 5; Tchaikovsky: Concerto No. 1; Chopin: Concerto No. 1; Schumann: Concerto in A-Minor; Brahms: Concerto No. 2; Rachmaninoff: Concerto No. 2, Rhapsody on a Theme of Paganini.
CRL7-0725

During April 1975, Artur Rubinstein recorded the complete Beethoven Piano Concertos with Daniel Barenboim conducting the London Philharmonic Orchestra. The set is scheduled to be released in the United States in February of 1976.

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This book has been compiled and edited by Robert Kimball, music and dance reviewer for The New York Post and author of "Cole" 1971, "Reminiscing with Sissle and Blake" 1973 (co-author William Bolcom), and "The Gershwins" 1973 (co-author Alfred Simon).

Designed and directed by Karl B. Leabo.

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This book has been prepared and published by Hurok Publications: Sheila Porter, editor; Karl Leabo, art director. Additional copies are available from Hurok Concerts, 1370 Avenue of the Americas, New York, N.Y. 10019.

Rubinstein's Five Beethoven Concertos,
with Daniel Barenboim conducting the London Philharmonic Orchestra,
will be available February 1976.

para Artur Rubinstein
su amigo
Picasso
Cannes el 19.7.58.