AS HE STRIDES OFF-STAGE IN BOSTON, RUBINSTEIN GLANCES OVER AUDIENCE THAT OVERFLOWED ONTO STAGE. "THIS IS A BEAUTIFUL HALL TO PLAY

A SUPERB SURVIVOR OF THE VIRTUOSOS

Back in the last century, when composers packed unfettered emotion into their piano pieces, the star performers of their music were the fabled virtuosos who played and lived with elegance and splendor. They added stylish flourishes to their performances and personalities, poured out passion on stage at the piano and off-stage in their many love affairs, and

Photographed for LIFE by DMITRI KESSEL

IN BECAUSE IT WAS BUILT FOR MUSIC, AND IT HAS GREAT DIGNITY," HE SAID. "AND DID YOU NOTICE THAT LOVELY YOUNG GIRL IN THE FRONT ROW?"

never let a melody or a moment go ungilded.

The single surviving practitioner of that grand manner combining the art of a rich music with the art of rich living is 70-year-old Artur Rubinstein, who is far and away the world's greatest single piano attraction. Some 150 times a year, he strides off the stage, showing few signs of fatigue, after having pounded the piano for two hours. The piano, thoroughly beaten, always needs a retuning to restore it. Rubinstein restores himself promptly with fine food and wine and admirers. In New York and Paris he gives himself the parties at his own palatial homes—he can afford grandeur with an income in the hundreds of thousands.

Far from being made weary by his work and complacent by his success, Rubinstein becomes more and more exhilarated by his life and his family and serious about his art. "Life can at its best be a movement toward perfection," he said. "When I was young I was a very disreputable character. I loved women, cards and brandy too much and I almost did not practice piano at all. Now I practice too."

and PIERRE BOULAT

CONTINUED

BREAKFAST IN PARIS for Rubinstein and wife Nela, 20 years younger, is served in boudoir of their mansion. With the meal pianist regularly drinks five cups of coffee and smokes three cigars.

ANGUISHED VIRTUOSO COVERS EYES AS PARIS

SCHOOLBOY'S KISS is planted on devoted father by 12-year-old John, youngest of children.

AIDE SAYS HIS PIANO IS LOST—TEMPORARILY

GREETING OLD FRIENDS, Rubinstein kisses hand of Actress Madeleine Renaud in her Paris dressing room after watching her and Jean-Louis Barrault (*left*) in production of *La Vie Parisienne*.

SAMPLING THE CAVIAR in a specialty shop, pianist tried selling it to others watching him eat.

← CARRIED AWAY by own joke, Rubinstein leads laughter as he finishes off a racy after-dinner story.

CONTINUED

IN PARIS HALL RUBINSTEIN NERVOUSLY WARMS HIS HANDS. "FEAR BEFORE EACH CONCERT," HE SAID, "IS THE PRICE I PAY FOR MY SUPERB LIFE"

A FAMILY AUDIENCE watches Rubinstein rehearse for an RCA-Victor recording. Son John is the page-turner as his sister Aline, 14, and mother listen. Rubinstein considers his wife, daughter of a Polish conductor, his wisest critic.

THE MODEL OF A VIRTUOSO—wearing a soft-brimmed fedora, pearl stickpin, fur-lined coat and carrying an English fox-head walking stick—Artur Rubinstein pauses for a moment in a stroll down a boulevard in Paris.