His Wizardry Elicits Cries Of Approval

New York Audience Stands And Cheers Arthur Rubinstein

By EUNICE HOWARD DANE

NEW YORK, April 2—Put Arthur Rubinstein at a piano, an orchestra for a backdrop, and a program of three of the greatest piano concerti ever written, and the result is one of the most exciting events of the New York musical season.

Recently at Carnegie Hall, Rubinstein was lord of all he surveyed as he brought to life the immortal works of Beethoven, Chopin and Rachmaninoff: the "G-major Concerto" of the master Bonn, the Polish poet's "E-minor Concerto," and Rachmaninoff's "Rhapsody on a Theme of Paganini."

I had the pleasure of hearing Mr. Rubinstein play the same program in Paris with the Paris Conservatoire Orchestra accompanying him—but the results were nowhere near as satisfactory as when conductor Mitropoulos, the Philharmonic and Rubinstein blended in one magnificent ensemble that would certainly have satisfied the composers, could they have been present to listen.

The concert was for the benefit of the Musicains' Pension fund; conductor, soloist and orchestra giving their services gratis, netting some $20,000 for this worthy cause.

I have followed Mr. Rubinstein's meteoric career since the early twenties and have seen him grow in stature until today he is second to none. I love the way he walks out on the platform, sits down at the piano, looks the audience straight in the eye for a few seconds as if to say "I am happy to see you," and then—as if drawing inspiration from the expectation of those out front—throws himself completely into the spirit of the muse, seemingly oblivious to everything except the interpretation of the music.

Mr. Rubinstein is now 65 years of age. But what is age when one hears such perfection of execution, with the fires of youth still burning brightly in his musical temperament? Recalling Mr. Rubinstein's former performance of this same program in Paris, I appreciated all the more the vital contribution of a good orchestra like the Philharmonic under a conductor such as Mitropoulos.

Pianists who have never undertaken the stint of playing three concerti on one program cannot realize the physical and mental effort involved. At the risk of seeming presumptuous, I may mention that this writer did attempt such a feat several years ago. Recalling these early concerti recitals of mine, I remember the difficulty in establishing the different moods of several composers, playing one concerto after the other.

Mr. Rubinstein proved his mastery in this respect, creating a magical spell which gripped the audience and carried us along on waves of song with interpretations which suited each concerto with rare ability.

When it comes to Chopin, Rubinstein, being of Polish descent, was in his element. No one today can wrest from the piano the singing tone or the romantic lyricism so necessary in the interpretation of Chopin. As is known, Chopin is considered a weak orchestrator, but in his concerti he displays a surprising mastery of orchestration or tutti, which made it evident that, had he lived longer, he might very well have ranked as an orchestrator with the greatest of his contemporaries.

As the program came to a triumphant close, the emotions of the audience brought them to their feet, with cheers and bravos lasting until the lights were turned out and the piano closed. It was a memorable evening and one which I will always treasure as rich in creative beauty and piano wizardry.