Concert at Pavilion by Artur Rubinstein

BY ALBERT GOLDBERG
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Artur Rubinstein completed his pianistic marathon of three gigantic recitals within five days, in the Dorothy Chandler Pavilion of The Music Center Monday and Wednesday nights.

Perhaps marathon is not the right metaphor for this struggle and effort and there was not a trace of either on the part of the pianist or of his audience. For the listeners it was pure joy, and if it were anything less for Mr. Rubinstein then he is as great an actor as he is a pianist.

Great Stamina

Each program was monumental, on content and performance. It is as idle to conjecture where Rubinstein finds the stamina and concentration for such feats as it is to attempt to define how he does them.

It is equally idle to try to be selective among such bounty. Can one truthfully say there was greater art involved in Brahms' massive F Minor Sonata than in the two exquisite Schubert Impromptus

ARTUR RUBINSTEIN

Piano recitals in Dorothy Chandler Pavilion of The Music Center, Monday and Wednesday nights.

Monday program:

Impromptus, A Flat, G Flat, Op. 90 ..... Schubert

Sonata, F Minor, Opus 5 ..... Brahms

"O Prete ou Bebe" ..... Villa-Lobos

Barcarolle, Opus 60, F Sharp, B Minor, Opus 25, F Minor, Opus 10, No. 2, C Sharp Minor, Opus 27, No. 1 ..... Chopin

Wednesday program:

Fantasiestucke, Opus 12 ..... Schumann

Sonata, B Minor, Opus 58 ..... Chopin

Suite, Opus 25 ..... Schumann

Polonaise-fantaisie, Opus 61 ..... Chopin

that preceded it? Or that Chopin's B Flat Minor Sonata (at UCLA last Friday) was any more affecting than the B Minor on Wednesday?

With some justification one can single out the Chopin Barcarolle. Mr. Rubinstein was reliably quoted as saying "I have never been entirely satisfied with the way I played it. There was always something a little wrong. But tonight I think it went quite well."

And he should have felt the same way about Wednesday's three Chopin encores: the A Flat Etude of Opus 25, played precisely as Robert Schumann described Chopin's own playing of it: the magic of the D Major Mazurka, and to top a formidable program, the performance of the A Flat Polonaise.

Definitive Examples

On a par with the Brahms Sonata in the German romantic vein were the eight pieces of Schumann's "Fantasiestuecke," definitive examples of a style of which Rubinstein seems to be the last remaining master.

And it is just as fascinating to note how Rubinstein differentiates between Chopin and Schumann — in tone, rubato, even technique—as it is to observe his complete transformation of speech in the 20th century idiom.

In the complete set of Villa-Lobos' "O Prole do Bebe" (The Baby's Family), concluding with the famous "Foldchinolla," there were pungency, humor, and graphic delineation. It were "modern" piano playing as opposed to romantic, yet it was quite different from Ravel's "Valses Nobles et Sentimentales," which was just as modern yet which evoked still another set of tonal values, harmonic balances and rhythmic elasticity.

For the hell of it, as it were, Rubinstein elected to close this festival of fabulous piano playing with Liszt's "Mephisto" Waltz. It might be invidious to record that he still owes us a few notes in the treacherous skips, but otherwise it was a hair-raising —if you have hair to raise —exhibition of the grand, old-fashioned manner.

For the sake of the record, Monday's encores were Scriabin's Nocturne for the left hand (the only repetition in the entire series), and Chopin's D Flat Nocturne and A Flat Waltz, Opus 34.