'Highlights from Rubinstein at Carnegie Hall'. **Debussy:** *La Cathédrale engloutie. Poissons d'or. Hommage à Rameau. Ondine.* **Szymanowski:** Four Mazurkas, Op. 50. **Prokofiev:** 12 *Visions Fugitives*, from Op. 22. **Villa-Lobos:** *Prole do Bébé.* Artur Rubinstein (piano). RCA RB 6504; S SB 6504. 12in. 40*s*.

RUBINSTEIN IS MUCH BETTER SERVED by the sound engineers than was Richter in his two Carnegie Hall recordings reviewed in this issue. His tone, always unmistakable, has here a richness, strength and mellowness usually associated only with the finest studio recordings. A second advantage over the Richter recitals is that Rubinstein's magnificent concert temperament conveys the exciting tension of a live performance, presumably the main purpose in recording public concerts.

The playing itself is of such a high quality that any criticism can only be of a purely personal nature. Some may find Rubinstein's Debussy, notably *Poissons d'or* and *Ondine*, a little too virile, but that his readings are valid and imaginative nobody will dispute. The four Szymanowski Mazurkas form an effective bridge between Debussy and Prokofiev and Rubinstein plays them with fine polish and energy, but they are somewhat overshadowed by the rest of the recital.

The two largest groups, 12 pieces from Prokofiev's *Visions Fugitives* and the Villa-Lobos, suite, *Prole do Bébé* (*Baby's family of Dolls*), are among the finest Rubinstein recordings that I have heard.

Rubinstein's profound understanding of tonal possibilities and his ever-active imagination bring to the *Visions Fugitives* the character of fantastic improvisations. Whether macabre hallucination or tender nocturne, each brief performance could be an object lesson in sonority, touch and climax.

It is well known that Rubinstein was one of the first champions of the music of Villa-Lobos and his association with *Prole do Bébé* dates back to 1922, when he gave its first public performance. This music is, like much of Villa-Lobos, largely based on Brazilian folk songs and the strikingly contrasted textures, though hghly original, are essentially pianistic. Those who have heard Rubinstein play these pieces in public will be delighted to find that the recording detracts nothing from his magical performance, the tone retaining its enormous range without loss of quality in general and the variety of touch is unimpaired.

This excellent recording can be recommended to those who want a souvenir of Rubinstein, playing in public at his supreme best. **B.L.**

RECORDS AND RECORDING.