Rubinstein Hailed In All-Chopin Concert

By MARIE HICKS DAVIDSON

To an audience which filled the Opera House to extra chairs in the orchestra pit, Artur Rubinstein, Polish pianist, last night superbly played an all-Chopin program and at its conclusion was accorded rousing, prolonged applause. Although he was generous with encores, the throng, like Oliver Twist, wanted more.

The evening was an interlude to be treasured in memory. So dazzling is Rubinstein's halo of artistic integrity one forgets the floor plan of technique.

Rubinstein's virtuosity is a nice balance of extroversion and introversion. Certainly there were pages and passages of fortissimo. Also there were lengthy interludes of tenderest legato when the Rubinstein fingers appeared to but stroke the keyboard, producing pianissimo of exquisite effect, yet audible to the topmost rafter.

Moments of simple, direct approach were contrasted with extraordinary elasticity of modulation. The Funeral March, for instance, in the Sonata B flat minor; it has been played by military bands to juke boxes, but never with such impressiveness as that which Rubinstein imparted to the famous threnody last night.

Inevitably, the program included the Polonaise A flat, fated to be popularly known as Chopin at his most vocative.

The Andante Spianato and Polonaise Brilliante opened the program with a web of romantic grandeur. The Barcarolle, Opus 60, was done with ineffable loveliness and the "Valse in C Sharp Minor" sang like the choir invisible.

The "Scherzo," Opus 31, was a succession of harmonics done with incredible felicity. The scales and arpeggios of the "Impromptu in G flat" rippled with amazing clarity, as if a lapidary were pouring a shower of diamonds.

The centenary of Chopin's death, celebrated in 1949 over the world, was observed here this season in three magnificent concerts by fellow countrymen of the composer: Malcuzynski, Brailowsky and Rubinstein, each an individualist.

Only the recording angel would have the temerity to name which came nearest to the great Pole's ideal.

Rubinstein, by nature dynamic, differs from the others in many respects, but always he keeps to the plastic line of a piece and deftly draws color and contrast.