NEWS OF MUSIC

Unique 'High Moment' Still Rubinstein Mark

By DAY THORPE

Artur Rubinstein, piano. Constitution Hall. Program: Sonata in F minor, Opus 57, Beethoven; Fantasiestucke, Opus 12, Schumann; Sonata in Three Movements, from Petrouchka Stravinsky; Barcarolle, Opus 60, Chopin; Two Preludes and two Mazurkas, Chopin; Scherzo in B flat minor, Chopin.

Several weeks ago in a discussion of the art of Artur Rubinstein, the opinion was advanced by one of our leading phonograph record dealers that Rubinstein reached the peak of his creativity years ago, that now he was repeating mechanically (though almost perfectly) artistic conceptions only remembered and no longer really felt.

"That may be true," said a doctor admired by his patients, but loved by all musicians, "but with Rubinstein there is always a moment in every recital when he is supreme and unique. He will play by rote for an hour and 27 minutes, but there will always be three minutes any other pianist in the world would envy."

That moment came for Rubinstein in his recital yesterday in Constitution Hall in "Des Abends," from Schumann's "Fantasiestucke. It was the most delicately spun, beautifully sung lyricism anyone has a right to expect from a piano.

This is not to say that the Schumann piece was the only remarkable feature of the great pianist's recital. The arrangement by the composer of a three movement suite from themes of Stravinsky's "Petrouchka" is an incredibly difficult virtuoso piece which Rubinstein dexterously rattles off as though it had no more technical pitfalls than "Fur Elise." The third movement—based on the "Russian Fair" music—is the most suitable for piano transcription. The other two movements, even when so brilliantly played as they were yesterday, need the coloring of Stravinsky's orchestra. The composer made this transcription especially for Rubinstein. He would have done better to have written an original composition, no less brilliant, but conceived in more pianistic terms.

There is no bluster in Rubinstein's "Appassionata" — one might say that it is a bit lacking in fire. His conception of the music is reflective and restrained. The second theme of the first movement is taken meno mosso, and there is a slight rallentando for emphasis before the sonata's final rushing F minor arpeggio. It is in the slow movement that the Rubinstein interpretation is most convincing. The cumulative effect is left to Beethoven's repeated halving of the note values, while the pianist paints the picture with completely unaffected simplicity.

heard, as well as four Paganini caprices, including the famous No. 24 which seems to have inspired numberless other composers to write variations on its theme.

Neither the Ysaye nor the Paganini works can be called profound, but they possess considerable fire and a rather frank and pleasing innocence at their best.

Mr. Barrett demonstrated sensitive musicianship as well as a thoroughly dependable technique. If his tone was occasionally on the thin side, his interpretations were solidly satisfying, and his program—the Aschaffenburg sonata in particular—was well worth hearing.