Greater London Council

ROYAL FESTIVAL HALL

Director: John Denison, C.B.E.

WILFRID VAN WYCK LTD.

present

A Pianoforte Recital

by

ARTUR RUBINSTEIN

Friday, 28th May 1971 at 8 p.m.

PROGRAMME AND NOTES **15p**

Front page photograph by EVA RUBINSTEIN, NEW YORK

PROGRAMME

Sonata in B flat No. 3 Op. posth. — SCHUBERT

Rhapsody in B minor Op. 79 No. 1
Rhapsody in G minor Op. 79 No. 2 — BRAHMS

INTERVAL

Valses nobles et sentimentales — RAVEL

Scherzo—Valse — CHABRIER

Ondine (from Preludes Book 2)
Prélude (from "Pour le Piano") — DEBUSSY

Dance of fear (from El Amor Brujo)
Dance of the Miller's Wife (from El Sombrero de Tres Picos) — DE FALLA

STEINWAY PIANOFORTE

R.C.A. VICTOR RECORDS

Programme Notes

by

MOSCO CARNER

(Author's Copyright)

Sonata in B flat Major Op. Posth. (D.960) **SCHUBERT**

Molto moderato
Andante sostenuto
Scherzo: Allegro vivace, con delicatezza
Allegro ma non troppo

Thanks to the pioneering work of Arthur Schnabel, Schubert's piano sonatas have now established themselves in the concert hall. We have by now come to see them in their true light—as the crowning achievement of Schubert's genius as a pieno composer and as a fascinating record of the various steges through which his development as a keyboard writer passed. Schubert wrote his first sonata in 1815, at the age of eighteen, and he penned his last in 1828, the year of his death. Within the space of thirteen years he composed twenty-one sonatas which are as eloquent a testimony to his inexhaustible powers of invention as they are to his persistent efforts to master his cyclical form. Admittedly, there are weaknesses in his large-scale structure, weaknesses which become particularly marked if we compare his sonatas with those of Beethoven. Beethovan was a concentrated musical thinker who strove after the utmost conciseness of expression. Schubert, on the other hand, was a lyrical singer who delighted in a broad, leisurely unfolding of his ideas. Concentration was not his strong suit—there are heavenly lengths' also in his sonatas. But this is more than compensated for by the beauty of his melodies, his sense of bold harmonic adventure, the immense variety in his rythmic language and, last but by no means least, his highly original style of piano writing. Schubert was a pianist but not a virtuoso such as Beethoven was. He wrote for the instrument in a far less brilliant manner than his older contemporary and, although his keyboard style has its own and often considerable difficulties, it is on the whole less rewarding for the pianist than Beethoven's treatment. This may be the explanation for the fact that Schubert's piano sonatas made so belated a conquest of the concert hall. In a sense Schubert composed them for himself, not for the world at large. The B flat major Sonata (D.960) is the last of the three big sonatas Schubert wrote some seven weeks before his death. His intention was to dedicate them to J. N. Hummel, Mozart's most distinguished pieno pupil, but they were not published until 1838 by which time Hummel himself had died, and so the publisher Diabelli decided to inscribe them to Schumann, the discoverer of the manuscript score of Schubert's Great C major Sonata. Each of these posthumous sonates opens up a vista into a different region of Schubert's imaginative world, each has a distinct character of its own. Yet, if the lyrical element is never far from them, it is particularly marked in the first two movements of the B flat major Sonata. The opening Molto moderato, broadly conceived, begins with a dream-like, quietly ruminating theme reminiscent of one of Schubert *Mignon* settings ('So lasst mich scheinen'). The surprise of the second subject is its first appearance in the far-away key of F sharp minor before it settles in the orthodox dominant of the tonic. And who but Schubert could have conceived a development section dominated by iridiscent chromatic harmonies which lead to a meditative hovering on D minor before the key of B flat major is reached in the recapitulation! The Andante sostenuto is a poem in sound—the apotheosis of Schubert's instrumental lyricism. It is cast in the remote key of C sharp minor and its subdued yet impassioned *appogiatura* recall those of the Song, *Der Doppelgänger*. An extraordinary effect is achieved by the left hand which ranges across four octaves below and above the right-hand melody enveloping it in a veil of a most delicate sonority. The Scherzo, in B flat major, is a piece of great delicacy, never rising above *p* and marked by bold harmonic shifts. Its unreal, almost spectral character is set off by the harshness of the Trio in the minor mode which, in strong contrast to the Scherzo, has a purely chordel texture, with irregular accents and an interior melody. The Finale is a sonate rondo bearing a certain resemblance to the last movement of Beethoven's String Quartet Op. 130. Its main theme or ritornello, a somewhat wistful and mercurial strain, starts off key and then swings into B flat major with charming effect. There are two episodes of a markedly contrasted character. The first of these is a broad, singing melody formed by the top notes of arpeggiated semiquavers figures, while the second storms along in an energetic dotted rhythm. The relatively short development introduces a fragments of the opening theme modulating at the same time to distant keys. After the recapitulation is over, the movement closes with a brilliant *Presto* coda.

Rhapsody in B minor, Op. 79, No. 1 **BRAHMS**

Rhapsody in G minor, Op. 79, No. 2

Brahms wrote the two Rhapsodies Op. 79 in 1879, in the prime of his creative career. They represent his piano style at its most mature displaying an impeccable, uniformly finely wrought workmanship. He called these pieces 'Rhapsodies', not because there is anything loose or casual about their thought and construction—on the contrary, their arguament is coherent and logical and their formal design firm and clear; but rather because they seem to be 'reciting' a tale like the rhapsodist in ancient Greece. They are passionate, deeply felt music, full of romantic poetry, and abrupt in the change of mood between their different sections. The Rhapsody No. 1 derives one of its chief effects from the contrast between a highly agitated, turbulent opening and a lyrical section of a quietly narrative character. And Brahms's consummate art of variation is seen in the Trio in B major, marked *molto dolce*, which is nothing else but an imaginative variant of the lyrical section. Its charming, musette-like character resides in the ingenuous use the composer makes of pedals in both the treble and bass.

In the Rhapsody No. 2 several seemingly unconnected idea following one another, but they spring from a central unifying mood and are, moreover, held together by a pervasive movement in flowing triplets. The piece is, like its companion, tripartite, yet approaches sonata form in that Brahms uses the middle section for an extensive development of his initial thematic ideas.

INTERVAL

A warning gong will be sounded for five minutes before the end of the interval

Valses nobles et sentimentales **RAVEL**

Valses nobles et sentimentales was written in 1911 and first performed the following year at a concert of the newly founded Société Musicale Indépendent. It had been decided to introduce the work anonymously the audience being invited to guess the identity of its composer. As Ravel records, while its authorship was recognized by only a small minority, the public at large was mystified receiving the music with protests and boos, while some critics attributed it to a variety of modern composers—from Satie to Kodaly! The title was taken from two sets of Schubert waltzes, as it was the composer's avowed intention to write

AUDIENCE PARTICIPATION: During a recent test in the Hall, a note played 'executions' on the tune measured approximately 65 decibels [db(A)] of sound. A single 'uncovered' cough gave the same reading. A handkerchief placed over the mouth when coughing assists in obtaining a 'pianissimo'.

NO SMOKING IN THE AUDITORIUM OR TAKING OF PHOTOGRAPHS.

IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE REQUIREMENTS OF THE GREATER LONDON COUNCIL: Persons shall not be permitted to stand or sit in any of the gangways intersecting the seating, or to sit in any of the other gangways.

FIRST AID FACILITIES are provided by the British Red Cross Society.

a chain of waltzes reminiscent of the Schubertian manner. Ravel added that the 'virtuoso element which was the basis of my *Gaspard de la nuit*, is here replaced by a style of writing of greater clarity which has the effect of sharpening the harmonies as well the outline of the music'. At the head of the score he quotes from the poet, Henri de Régnier: 'La plaisir délicieux et toujours nouveau d'une occupation inutile'—perhaps a clue to the mood Ravel was in when he composed these pieces. Ravel has written piano works of far greater brilliance and more striking technical display but none which embodies the quintessence of his personality as completely as the *Valses nobles et sentimentales*.

There are seven waltzes and an epilogue all remarkable for their almost epigrammetic concision and a subtly sensuous yet rather acid fragrance possessed by no other composition of Ravel's to the same degree. As an English biographer (Rollo M. Myers) aptly wrote: 'The work is a microcosm in which the whole of Ravel's formidable musical equipment, both technical and emotional, and especially his harmonic sense, can be studied to the very best advantage'. Indeed, its subtleties and refinements of style moved Debussy, who was no mean judge in these matters, to say: 'C'est l'oreille la plus fine qui ait jamais existé'. The seven waltzes are of varying character and length and are rounded off by the epilogue which is a kind of summing-up in which Ravel quietly and nostalgically reminisces on the links of his waltz chain.

Scherzo — Valse **CHABRIER**

Chabrier's professional career as a composer did not start until relatively late in life. For eighteen years he was an official in the Ministry of the Interior in Paris which he left in 1880, aged nearly forty, to devote himself exclusively to composition. Chabrier's fame rests today largely on his 'Spanish' pieces, such as *España* (1883) and *Habanera* (1885) in which he was able to recapture the broad, popular element of, chiefly, Andalusian music in a more direct way than the 'Spanish' pieces by Debussy and Ravel. He was, moreover, a humorist and wit of the typically Gallic variety and thus strikes us a forerunner of Eric Satie and one or two members of *Les Six* (Poulenc and Milhaud). Who but Chabrier could think of a *Quadrille* on themes from *Tristan*, write a *Menuet pompeux* or entitle a song *Pastorale des cochons roses?* But Chabrier superimposed on this vein a turgid Wagnerian style, as, for instance, in his opera, *Gwendoline*, which was completely at variance with his natural talent and really incompatible with it.

Chabrier's piano music is elegant, charming and economic in manner which is another link with Satie. A good example of this is the *Scherzo-Valse*, the last of his *Dix Pièces grotesques* (1880), which, while harmonically very simple, is a brilliant study in staccato writing.

Ondine **DEBUSSY**

Debussy's two sets of *Préludes* (1910 and 1913) may be said to display the whole wide range of his art as a piano composer. At the same time they are a microcosm of images, moods and atmospheres of the most diverse kind. In them, Debussy transports us to the exotic ambience of the Orient, gives us vignettes of an imaginary Spain, Italy and Scotland, treats us to the antics of clowns and eccentrics from real life as well as from literature, makes us the observers of nature phenomena such as snow, mist, wind and water, and enchants us with his 'tales' from ancient mythology and remote legends. *Ondine*, in the second set of *Préludes*, belongs to the last-named variety. The legendary water nymph comes to life in a nimbly tripping dance executed against the spray and backwash of waves. In Debussy she is a creature of night—the dynamics never rise above *p*, indeed most of the music is in an extremely soft, subdued vein.

Prélude from the Suite 'Pour le piano' **DEBUSSY**

The three movements of which Debussy's piano suite, *Pour le piano*, consists, were composed at different times—the first, *Prélude*, in 1896, and the last, *Toccata*, in 1901. Each piece bears a dedication to a different person. The work is generally regarded as being the first to display the characteristic features of Debussy's keyboard style—suggestive, evocative and conjuring up a subtle atmosphere at once archaic and exotic. We hear in it echoes from Couperin and Rameau but at the same time there are suggestions of the Javanese *gamelan* which came as such a revelation when he heard it at the Paris exhibition of 1889.

In the *Prélude* there are unmistakable signs that Debussy was trying to get away from conventional piano writing and venture into new territory. The opening *martellato* theme repeated in strongly contrasted registers, the bold use made of harmonies based on the whole-tone scale, and the disembodied, harp-like sound at the conclusion—all this stamps the piece as a novel and highly original contribution to early 20th-century piano music.

Dance of Fear from 'El Amor brujo' **FALLA**

Dance of the Miller's Wife from 'El Sombrero de tres picos'

Falla's two ballets—*El Amor brujo* (Madrid, 1915) and *El Sombrero de tres picos* (London, 1919) show him at the height of his powers of *evocación*. It is as if Spain herself, her strangely mixed atmosphere of Moorish and occidental elements, comes to life in them. Both the choreography and the music recreate a Spanish ambience, notably of Andalusia, in the most vivid colours, and this with the composer hardly ever resorting to authentic native music but assimilating its characteristic melodic and rhythmic inflexions to his own style in a highly individual manner.

The gist of the story on which *El Amor brujo* or *The Demon Lover* is as follows:

Candela, a beautiful and passionate gypsy girl, was once loved by a dissolute and jealous character, now dead. She believes that his ghost is continuing to love her in his savage fashion. It is now Carmelo who is in love with her, but whenever he presses his suit on her, the ghost appears and frightens him away. By a clever ruse Carmelo succeeds in laying the spectre and the lovers fall into each other's arms. The *Dance of Fear* occurs early in the ballet where it accompanies the appearance of the demon lover.

Alarcón's *El Sombrero de tres picos* or *The Three-Cornered Hat* is based on a Spanish ballad which (like most popular ballads) is said to be founded on fact. It tells how a lecherous magistrate is thwarted in his intentions to seduce the Miller's beautiful wife and in the end has to eat humble pie. The Dance of the Miller's Wife, a *fandango*, comes in the first part of the ballet.

ARTUR RUBINSTEIN

"The man and his music enrich the lives of people everywhere"

by HOWARD TAUBMAN

formerly Music Editor of the New York Times

ARTUR RUBINSTEIN is a complete artist because he is a whole man. It does not matter whether those who go to his concerts are ear-minded or eye-minded—or both. His performances are a comfort to, and an enlargement of, all the faculties in the audience. And he has the choice gift of being able to convey musical satisfaction—even exaltation—to all conditions of listeners from the most highly trained experts to the most innocent of laymen.

The reason for this is that you cannot separate Artur Rubinstein the man from Artur Rubinstein the musician. Man and musician are indivisible, as they must be in all truly great and integrated interpreters. You know this at once when you meet Rubinstein off the concert platform, and you know it beyond any shadow of doubt when you hear him play.

It has been written that Rubinstein represents the last of a great line of magnetic virtuosos who were in the ascendant in the nineteenth century and who made their last stand in the first half of the twentieth. It has been added nostalgically that he owes his special position in the musical world to the expansive, romantic flair he has carried over from a departed age.

Such an analysis is only partly true. Rubinstein has the romantic flair, all right, but his stature as an artist as well as his hold on the public are based on other qualities. He is a modern man, too. He does not dramatize himself as a Liszt or as Paderewski did. He does not posture or theatricalize himself or his work in public, as a lesser figure might, to live up to a naive picture of what a virtuoso should be. He happens to be a thoughtful, alert, sensitive, generous-hearted, civilized human being who expresses himself through music.

Call him a universal man, and you will be nearest the mark. He would be at home in any place or time where cultivated values are respected. And the fact is that he has been hailed as an artist and admired as a man all over the world. In his decades as a public performer he has appeared, it has been estimated, in every country except Tibet.

The breadth of Rubinstein's sympathies are inescapable in the concert hall. He plays music of all periods and lands and to each he gives its due. Because Rubinstein was born in Poland, he has a special fellow-feeling for the music of Chopin and he recreates it with glowing conviction. But he is not simply a Chopin specialist, which would be accomplishment enough. He plays Bach and Beethoven, Schubert and Schumann, Brahms and Debussy and a host of other composers of past and present with equal felicity.

Rubinstein has a commanding technique. He can make the piano do whatever he wishes, but his aim is never to show off his virtuosity. His technical command is the servant of his art. He has the rarest of gifts of being able to play all kinds of music with eloquence. He can project his imagination into each creative world, as if he were a citizen of that world. And that is the test of the complete artist and the whole man.

Rubinstein is secure in his knowledge, and on the concert platform he conveys the impression of a man who has achieved serenity. This has misled some observers into thinking that he has no nerves, and some have gone so far as to say that he lacks the necessary ingredient of tension. You have only to hear the excitement of his playing to know that he projects tremendous tension, but it is the tension of an enormously powerful steel spring under full control. You have only to talk to him to realize that he is as subject to nervous pressure as the rest of us.

I heard him recall once that a young musician had boasted to him "Playing in public doesn't worry me at all, I have no nervousness." Rubinstein's response was, "How lucky you are! I wish you could teach me your secret."

It is almost bromidic to say that an artist conveys in his art the sum of what he has absorbed from life. But this truth needs to be emphasized in the instance of music because people with little knowledge or experience of this art may fail to see the connection. In the case of Rubinstein it is not only important to be aware of the connection; it must be grasped thoroughly, for Rubinstein, as much as any interpreter around today, reflects in his musical performances the kind of life he has lived and the kind of man he is.

Born in Lodz, he was the youngest of seven children in a family that was well-to-do; his father owned a handloom factory. At 3 Artur showed an aptitude for music. Offered a fiddle several times, he smashed it. By the age of 8, he was ready to impress the distinguished violinist, Joseph Joachim, with his progress at the piano. Young Artur's sister happened to be travelling to Berlin to prepare for her marriage at this time, and took the lad along. Joachim heard him and put him under the care of Heinrich Barth, who had studied with Bulow, Tausig and Liszt. When he was 11, Artur made his formal debut in Berlin in a Mozart concerto, with Joachim conducting the orchestra.

Artur, a cheerful, outgoing boy who had come from a happy home environment, seems to have relished the excitements of a prodigy's success for a time. He had played all over Germany and Poland, once in Warsaw under the direction of Emil Mlynarski, distinguished conductor, whose daughter, Aniela, not yet born was destined to become Mrs. Rubinstein. During this period Joachim sent Artur to visit Paderewski, the giant of his time at the keyboard, and Paderewski, delighted with the young fellow's ability and personality, prevailed on him to prolong his visit to three months.

At the age of 16, Artur made his first foray into America. In January, 1906, he played in Philadelphia with the Philadelphia Orchestra and a few days later with the same orchestra in New York. He played a lot of concerts in the United States, but the response was far from ecstatic. Later on he could sum up the reaction philosophically by explaining "I was not a prodigy any more, and I was not a mature artist. The critics were severe, much too severe. I thought I had lost America forever."

He returned to Europe and for the next few years seemed to drop out of sight. When he appeared in Berlin in 1910 he explained to friends who inquired where he had been, "Oh, I have been dead for a few years." Actually, the experience of those years amounted to a new birth. He spent most of his time in Paris, in those "missing years." He studied some, and met a great many men and women of all stations and backgrounds. He saw and did things that an adolescent ripening into manhood could see and do with profit, provided he has the energy and intelligence to profit from them. Rubinstein did profit. Later he was able to say that he was occupied in "hurdling the greatest obstacle in the path of a prodigy, that of shedding my immaturity."

Back in the concert swirl, success again greeted him in Europe. By 1914 he had toured all over the continent and his temperament had made his piano playing the sesame to acceptance everywhere. When the war broke out he was in London, where his knowledge of languages enabled him to find work as an interpreter for the Allies. Then he concertized for the Allies in joint appearances with Eugene Ysaye. A desk job could not consume the energies of this young man.

In 1916 he went to Spain for a handful of concerts and remained to give 120. If Rubinstein is a musician with confidence in himself, the Spanish chapter could not but have reinforced this feeling. He became friendly with the royal family; he was invited to the royal palace for frequent dinners. Suddenly he was surrounded by money and success even he had not dreamed of. He admitted later that his technique was a bit erratic, but there was no need to bother about cleaning it up in the face of such adulation. It is the measure of Rubinstein's capacity for continuous growth that later on he took himself in hand and drove himself to iron out the deficiencies. But the impact of Spanish success remained on the Rubinstein career; in later years South America took him to its heart with a similar brand of Latin expansiveness and affection.

In February, 1919, Rubinstein confronted New York again. He was well received, especially by the elements of the press. He returned from time to time until 1927, but for reasons difficult to grasp he did not capture the hearts and imagination of the American people as he was to do later on. It was not, in fact, until his return in 1937—he had not played here (America) for ten years by this time—that he made an all-conquering return. This time he came back under the managership of S. Hurok. At once he was hailed as one of the great living musicians. His fees and his engagements multiplied. His field of activity widened to include an occasional film and radio appearance where he won his way not only as a pianist but as a charming figure as a guest with the redoubtable "Information, Please" panel of experts.

Was it America or Rubinstein that had changed? It may be that the United States, which has a way of remaining faithful to its pianistic heroes, was more devoted to people like Paderewski, Rachmaninoff, Hofmann. It may also be that changes had occurred in Rubinstein. An important event had taken place in his life in 1932. He had married Aniela Mlynarski. Soon he began to have a family. There are four children: Eva, born in Buenos Aires in 1933; Paul, born in Warsaw in 1935, Alina, born in Hollywood in 1945, and John Arthur, arrived in Hollywood in 1946.

Rubinstein is a firm advocate of love and marriage. Both helped him as an artist. "Suddenly," he once recalled "I became conscious of every wrong note." He and his new bride went in 1932 to a small chalet in the Alps, and in a garage he worked away at an upright piano, practising more intensely than he had ever done before. With the self-knowledge of maturity, he knew how to make every moment count. He found that work in itself was rewarding. He gained even greater technical assurance and, perhaps more important, he reached for and began to achieve new interpretive peaks.

Here we have one of the great secrets of Rubinstein's growing dominion over public taste. He has never ceased to grow. Driven by his own tremendous gusto and relish for life, he translated it into an ever-increasing breadth of musical vision. He dared to strive for the large simplicity, shucking off mannerisms that are the attributes of lesser artists. It may be said of him what was said of the venerable Benjamin Franklin, "The older the bolder." And the better musically.

Rubinstein embraces life as ardently as he does music. "I happen to be born with a terrific vitality," he has said. "I am happy unconditionally. Life holds so much—so much to be happy about always. Most can only be felt if you don't ask any conditions."

And Rubinstein can find happiness in all situations. He likes the company of all kinds of people, and he is at home with workers and creators in all the arts, with business men, politicians, taxi-drivers, waiters, diplomats, heads of state. He has gaiety in social encounters. He has a fund of stories and he knows how to tell them in any one of his arsenal of languages. He can also act them out with gestures and facial expressiveness that add to the jest. In his travels all over the world he has been not merely a tourist passing through a strange land, but an absorbed student.

Rubinstein is business-like about his artistic commitments and artistic in the affairs of living. When he first appeared in a film studio, there was trepidation that a temperamental virtuoso would make trouble. He took off his coat, rolled up his sleeves, and said "Let's make some music." In the recording studio—he is one of the best sellers in the glittering stable of Victor recording artists—he knows how to work with dispatch, and he knows equally well how to take a spacious breather.

In his personal life he lives in the grand manner, not from affectation but because it is native to him. He smokes Havana cigars specially blended for him and drinks the finest wines and cognacs. His home in Hollywood—he calls it his thirty-second "permanent home"—is a blend of elegance and simplicity. It is a proper setting for a man of his parts. But much as he adores being in it with his family, he could not remain long away from his concert rounds. Making music is in his blood, and the joy of reaching countless thousands of people through this music is ample reward for the difficulties of trouping.

No one place could confine a richly varied personality like Rubinstein. It is well that this should be so. For the man and his music enrich the lives of people everywhere.

Greater London Council

ROYAL FESTIVAL HALL

Director: John Denison, C.B.E.

MONDAY 7th JUNE 1971 at 8 p.m.

WILFRID VAN WYCK LTD. present

ARTUR RUBINSTEIN

ALL-CHOPIN PROGRAMME

Polonaise-Fantaisie in A flat major Op. 61

Nocturne in F sharp major Op. 15

Mazurka in C minor Op 56 No. 3

Sonata in B flat minor Op. 35

Barcarolle Op. 60

4 Etudes from Op. 10 and 25

Berceuse Op. 57

Scherzo in C sharp minor Op. 39

STEINWAY PIANOFORTE

R.C.A. VICTOR RECORDS

ALL SEATS SOLD

VAIL & CO. LTD. LEEKE STREET. LONDON. W.C.1