Daily News, Saturday, January 30, 1988

At any age, Rubinstein still music to our ears

Geneva (AP)—The friends of maestro Arthur Rubinstein, celebrating the venerable pianist's birthday, wished, "May he live 150 years!"—tacking an extra half century onto the traditional Polish toast just for good measure.

The Polish-born Rubinstein isn't very far from his 100th birthday, but just how far is a matter of some debate.

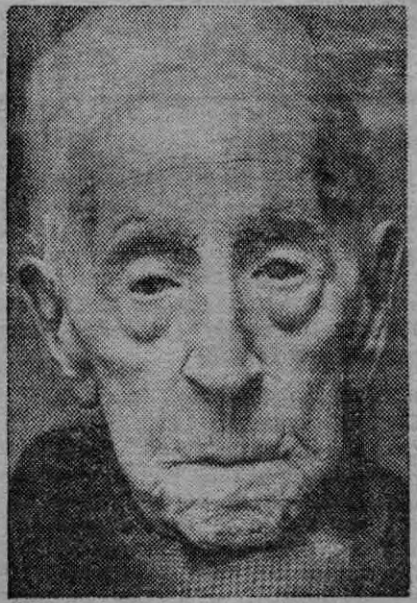
He says he was born in Lodz 95 years ago, Western reference books say he's 93 and the Polish Embassy sent him congratulations on his 96th birthday.

But none of this spoiled the party.

"A hundred is much too soon" at any rate, his friends said, so "Sto Lat!—May he live 100 years!" wouldn't do as a toast.

The immensely popular artist, whom some people call "the pianist of the century," blew out nine big candles and five small ones as well-wishers crowded in his Geneva apartment on Thursday.

He says it was on Jan. 28, 1887, that he "rang the bell at the gate of life as a belated and rather unwanted guest." He was the seventh child in the family of a Lodz textile industrialist. ■



Arthur Rubinstein—his birthday celebrated in Geneva.