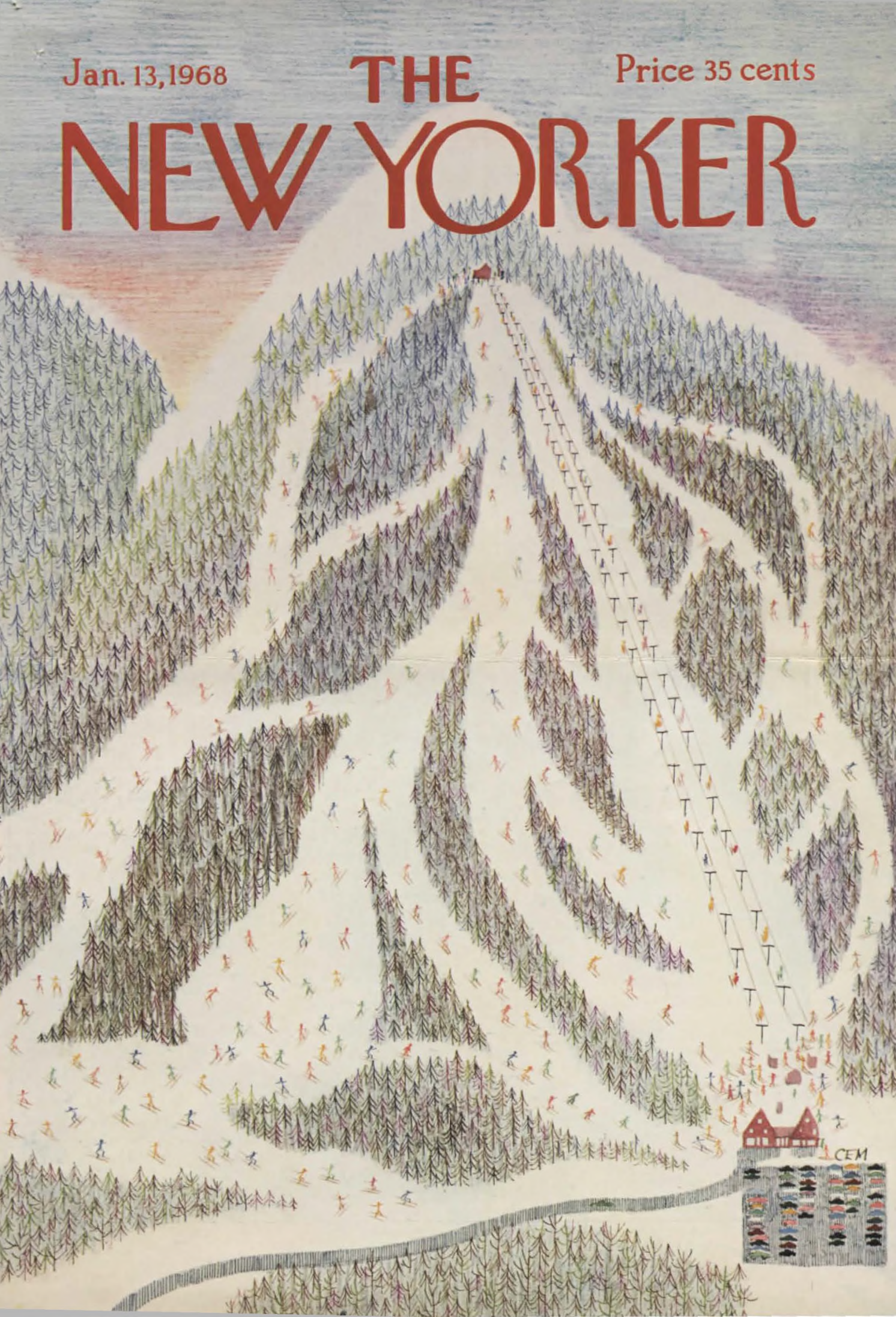
Jan. 13, 1968

THE NEW YORKER

Price 35 cents



gaps between piano playing, and reading the music, which was on the piano before him. As an instance of emergency understudying, the effect was spectacular. And Mr. Bernstein's piano playing, in any case, was quite good.

HOW does one write about a concert by Artur Rubinstein? Should one acclaim him, for the hundredth time, as simply the world's greatest pianist? No. That becomes boring after a while. Should one seek out comparisons with great pianists of the past and present? Well, that leads only to Josef Hofmann, as probably the last who could stand the comparison, to such pianists as Wilhelm Backhaus, who could play *some* kinds of music as well as Rubinstein can, or to the mysterious Sviatoslav Richter, who hasn't played here often enough to be judged thoroughly but who is also a spellbinder. Should one try, in the hopelessly clumsy medium of words, to describe his playing? There are some who think that this is what a critic is for. I don't. In a way, a Rubinstein concert is impossible to write criticism about, and this is for a very good reason. Normally, a critic is a man who tries to evaluate music objectively. He analyzes while others enjoy. He is the man who keeps his head when all about him are losing theirs. But with Rubinstein the critic is lured away from his objective role. He discovers that he can't analyze, because he is being hypnotized into enjoyment just like any other listener. He loses his bearings and begins to think simply, "What incredibly beautiful music!" The environment disappears. Even the pianist disappears. And the critic finds himself in a trance, which is no proper place to think critically in. This was my reaction, last Friday night, to the first of the four concerts in Carnegie Hall by the great pianist—now eighty-one. Despite all those years, he chose a terrifically demanding program, consisting of Beethoven's "Waldstein" Sonata; Schumann's "Fantasiestücke," Opus 12; Chopin's C-Sharp-Minor Scherzo, Opus 39, and Ballade in A Flat Major, Opus 47; twelve "Visions Fugitives," by Prokofieff; and, to round off things with a superb virtuoso flourish, Liszt's "Mephisto Waltz." Not only was the program demanding, it showed that Rubinstein is a master of style in *all* kinds of piano music. I shall limit what critical remarks I have to make (I surfaced now and then from the fog of my trance) to pointing out the superb control of form and detail in

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the Beethoven sonata, the magnificent sense of Romantic feeling in the Schumann, the amazing vigor and technical *élan* in the Chopin scherzo, and the brilliance and dash of the Liszt work. But my adjectives are worn and heavy for this task. Perhaps I can make myself clearer in this way: After listening to Rubinstein, I realized how few *artists* there are in the world of musical performance. I hear musicians night after night. I find excellent craftsmen, people with scintillating technique, people with unusual musical insight. Occasionally, I get excited and call them artists. I've got to be more careful.

TO pick up a few loose threads: I was tipped off that the New York City Ballet had a new guest performer in its production of "The Nutcracker," and I dropped in at the New York State Theatre just before last Thursday night's Philharmonic concert to see him as the Sugar Plum Fairy's Cavalier in the last of the divertissements, which came onstage at approximately eight o'clock. The new performer is Peter Martins, of the Royal Danish Ballet, and he is a fine dancer indeed. It is not often that one sees such leaps and such general elegance of movement as he exhibited the other night, and though he is obviously a star, he fitted quite neatly into Balanchine's understated and unexhibitionistic style of ballet.

To pick up another, and longer, thread: Sometime before Christmas—on the afternoon of December 16th, to be exact—I attended a concert by the Youth Symphony Orchestra of New York, in Carnegie Hall, under the baton of Leonard Slatkin and with an attractive nineteen-year-old pianist named Pamela Mia Paul as soloist in Chopin's First Piano Concerto. The conductor seemed talented and the orchestra eager, though the intonation of its brasses and woodwinds is in need of thorough overhauling. Miss Paul played with a technique that was bright and sturdy but without the sensitivity to emotional meaning that she will undoubtedly acquire in time. As Beethoven would say, she needs to have her heart broken.

—WINTHROP SARGEANT

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In the New York trial, which he conducted himself, he contended that he was not capable of standing trial because of his sanity.—*The Times.*

It's a hazard in any situation.