King Artur Returns To Throne In Heinz Hall Recita

By CARL APONE
Press Music Editor

Before his recital last year at Syria Mosque, Artur Rubinstein told a reporter that the hall was sold out because people think his every appearance might be his last. And they all want to say they "heard Rubinstein's final program," he quipped.

If the puckish Rubinstein is to be believed, the overflow crowd at Heinz Hall last night also turned out to hear what might be his final program. What they heard, however, did not sound at all like a shaky finale.

Indeed, at age 84 and another birthday coming up on Friday, Rubinstein has not even started to fade away. He has made some half dozen solo performances here during the past 10 years, and last night's was the best of the lot. Unbelievable as it may be, Rubinstein now seems to be at the peak of his powers.

The crowd gave this American institution a lusty ovation at the start of the program, and some in the audience seemed determined to applaud after every movement

There was a standing ovation at the end of the regular program, and, as is customary at his recitals, Rubinstein responded with several encores.

ARTUR RUBINSTEIN
In top form.

Varied Program

The program opened with Two Impromptus by Schubert; Sonata No. 3, Brahms; three works by Debussy, Ondine, Poissons d'or, Prelude in A Minor; and three works by Chopin, Barcarolle, Nocturne No. 2 and Polonaise in A-flat.

Throughout the evening, it was apparent Rubinstein leaves the heaven-storming to younger men. He now puts emphasis on introspection, mellow readings. There were, to be sure, outbursts of emotional heat, but for the most part intellectual coolness prevailed.

He emphasized lines, not single notes, a supreme virtue, and the lucidity of these phrases was a joy to hear.

Rubinstein is a powerful, stocky man who goes about his work in a businesslike, straightforward manner.

All the while he stirs a nice blend of delicate sounds and powerful fortes. He plays these soft and loud passages without interrupting the rhythm and without attracting undue attention to either.

When needed, he had the imagination and artistry to rescue some of the bland and commonplace passages. And all of these factors made him sound very much like the master of the piano as well of the music he played.

A Cold Ring

The opening Impromptus had a cold, bronze ring to them. And when he touched the quiet place they were as clean and flowing as a bass swimming in a cold mountain stream.

In the Brahms the details worth admiring were the architecture, the organization, the musical meaning and the ferocious climaxes.

In the Andante there was a miniature grandeur, and then the majestic melodies exploded into heroic climaxes.

The sparkle and passion were there, so were the rich and varied tonal colors and he communicated the meaning in a persuasive manner

In the Debussy works, he never rushed, never tried to make them a technical tour de force. The lights and shadows, the subtleties and inflections so representative of the great pianists, were much in evidence.

Rubinstein is Polish by birth and the Chopin works by his fellow countryman were like bonfire at the end of a triumphant evening. For my taste, the three works were more attractive than anything on the entire all-Chopin program last year.

Wide Latitude

This composer's works a mit a wide interpretative la tude. Most attractive here w the organization and mood, t freedom and directness.

Here was a model of paci planning, contrasts and c trolled drama building to resounding climax. And p haps most important of all, opened his heart to the mus

Ten years ago when Rub stein performed here the were signs that royalty h grown a bit shabby, signs musical powers in decline.

There were no such signs evidence last night. touched musical truth of during the night and the cro knew it. It was as if Ki Arthur had returned to h throne again.