Rubinstein Plays His Peace With Germans at Nijmegen

By DAVID M. NICHOI

BONN — Arthur Rubinstein is close to making peace with the German people.

The Polish-born pianist vowed in 1914 that he would never again play in Germany, where he had much of his early training and his first great successes.

The 74-year-old artist has remained true to his word, but he seems now to regret it. He is "too old and too proud," he told German visitors recently, and possibly also just a bit superstitious.

Instead, he agreed to a compromise. He would play a concert in Nijmegen, a Dutch city on the German border that was the scene of bitter fighting in World War II.

About 1,000 Germans came from as far away as Frankfurt and Hamburg. German critics are still in raptures about the concert.

One wrote of "Details I have never heard before, and certainly never will again." Another described it as "A tremendously moving experience," both musically and from the human standpoint.

Rubinstein told one of his visitors he felt he had never played Brahms better.

In the end, after three encores, he was given a half-hour ovation. Eyewitnesses report the pianist was nearly in tears.

Germans hope now the border concert will be repeated, perhaps in Strasbourg, France, or in Basel, Switzerland.

Rubinstein made his initial vow when he heard of some savage reprisals against Polish civilians in the eary days of World War I. During the Nazi years some of Rubenstein's relatives are said to have died in concentration camps.

But in Nijmegen he told the German critics with whom he seems to have spoken at length that he felt a "New Germany" had come into being.

He seems to have retained warm memories of the musical intensity and receptiveness of German audiences