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Rubinstein's Chopin Soars

A capacity crowd came to Artur Rubinstein's Chopin Fund concert at Philharmonic Auditorium yesterday afternoon, piling up net proceeds of more than $6000 with which to provide music, instruments and needed food and medical supplies for destitute musicians of the recent war. The concert, the first of three all-Chopin programs for which the great pianist is donating his services, will be followed by recitals in Chicago and New York.

There is nothing dreamy or ephemeral about the way in which Rubinstein plays Chopin. The music is powerfully and highly dramatized, and even the soft passages are a velvet scabbard for his rapier-steel technique. The improvisational character of most of Chopin's music and its lack of strict formal construction give the soloist a wide latitude of interpretation. Rubinstein's is rhapsodic, to put it in a single word, with a great contrast between chordal emphasis and the shining filigree of his supple finger work.

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This was particularly noticeable in both the C-sharp minor Scherzo and Waltz and in the 23rd Mazurka. Chopin is so frequently played up to his neurotic character that it is exciting to have a performance of such brilliance by an artist who is the physical, emotional and virtuosic antithesis of the composer.

Although one may find fault with Rubinstein in matters of phrasing and emphasis, he has the asset of giving a concert in which nothing is held back, in which he always plays to the extreme limit of his exceptional capabilities. This was especially to be noted yesterday, and the overwhelming applause of the audience, which called him back for repeated and graciously-given encores, testified to the appeal his music has.

The opening half of the concert was given over to a deeply moving performance of the "Tragic" Polonaise (the best number on the entire program,) the "Barcarolle" (Op. 60) and the complete set of 24 Preludes, some of which were unforgettable glistening jewels.

C.S.H.