

ARTHUR RUBINSTEIN EXTOLS THE MODERNS

Polish Virtuoso Finds Beethoven "Mediaeval" and Worships at Shrine of Stravinsky, Debussy, Ravel and Other Latter Day Apostles—Blasts the "Chopin Tradition"—Declines to Join the One-Composer Cult—"Thirty Years Old and Perfectly Happy"

"THIRTY years old, and perfectly happy," Arthur Rubinstein described himself to the writer recently, and he looked it. Happy, that is; he looks much younger than the three decades he claims to have lived. The place was the Biltmore Hotel, and the occasion, after-lunch coffee in the big tearoom. The pianist had just returned from Mexico and was passing through our beautiful little city en route to London.

One does not wonder, on meeting the Polish artist, and hearing him talk, that the critics last season described him as "the whirlwind among pianists." He gives one the impression of being caught in a whirlwind of vitality. His brown eyes glow as he talks; his face, clear-cut of feature, talks too; his curly mop of hair seems to stand on end with his effervescent energy. The most boyishly-nice smile imaginable adds, now and again to the general effect of quickness and of a leaping flame.

"Please do not let anyone tell you unkind things about Mexico," he implored, in his excellently-pronounced, occasionally quaintly-expressed English. Mr. Rubinstein speaks nine languages, he says; and if none of them are any worse than his English, he ought to be able to qualify for a diplomatic post. "The Mexican has been so long represented as a sort of a stage villain; in the pictures he is always the 'bad man'; and yet, I found them such a delightful, kind, enthusiastic people, especially thrilled with music, that I never want to hear them spoken badly of again. I gave twenty-six concerts in one place; I was there four months; and I learned much that was very interesting about the people. They love music passionately; they will bring their little children and stand in line for hours in order to hear some."

His Joyous Outlook

He has a most joyous, most optimistic outlook on life, this countryman of the sad Pole Chopin. Just as we were talking of the difficulty, or rather the necessity (for difficulty is a word of which he apparently refuses to acknowledge the existence) of varying programs sufficiently when one gives twenty-six concerts in somewhat rapid succession, an attendant dropped a tray of spoons with a frightful clatter. One looked for the highly-strung artistic type to go literally up in air; but Mr. Rubinstein, instead, laughed a boy's laugh of utter delight.

"Did you see that tray drop?" he demanded, charmed. "It was just like in vaudeville; you know? The man comes on and then he drops everything hard!"

"You like vaudeville?"

"I like everything. Everything good, that is. I am all for joy and love and things beautiful."

It was then that he made the remark quoted above as to his years and tapped the shining wood of the table hastily. We both laughed.

"I insist I am happy," he said. "My life has been like a bank deposit of happiness, to be added to right along. Now I have a big deposit. I can live on my capital if sorrow should come; and I do not think I would have any right at all to complain if it did. And I do not know but that all experiences can add to one's joy, even sorrow. Everybody has a right to some troubles and if they come—why, we are just only like tiny flies in the scheme of life. Why should one little fly demand to be happier than the rest? The days go by; and nobody matters," he added quaintly.

"You know," he said presently, "one must take a thing always as one feels it

one's self; not as others tell you to feel it. When I was quite young, I had little busts of Beethoven and Mozart on my piano. They were my gods of music. I thought they could do nothing that was unbeautiful. Why, one-half of Beethoven's sonatas are—well, they bore me stiff," he offered with a laugh and a sudden relaxation from the dignity of his language. "Out of fifty-two sonatas, why shouldn't some do that? But I had been taught to revere what he and Mozart wrote, just because they wrote it. But very soon I went on my travels as a young boy, and by degrees my viewpoint changed. I have lived in so many different cities; in Berlin, Rome, Vienna, Paris, Moscow. I had the Jewish capacity to adapt myself to any place, and I felt in each city in very short time as though I had been born there. Just now," he smiled, "I am really Mexican."

"I refuse to specialize in any one master," he went on. "More especially one of the type that I call epochal. I hate the idea that Brahms is a composer who must be held sacred, like Beethoven. Now as to the Chopin tradition, so called; why, it is all wrong. I know the critics were horrified, some of them, at the way I played Chopin, but that doesn't trouble me. They will come around to my way of thinking; Lemberg and Cracow did, and New York will too. You see, Chopin never had the physical strength to teach men. His pupils were mostly hysterical women. So he had no great pupils such as d'Albert and von Bulow were to Liszt, for instance. Consequently, at first, the impression went out that he was a sort of apostle of delicacy, daintiness, degeneration. The magnificent, virile quality of mind that was hidden away in Chopin, outwardly the weak, sickly, spoiled child-darling of great ladies, can be found in his music, but only by such as have some of those qualities; and some of the Polish sadness, which is so very far removed from weakness, however. I sometimes think that only a Pole can really play Chopin."

A View of Paderewski

"Paderewski, for example?"

"He is the diplomat born, Paderewski. He has the most extraordinary gift of creating a personal as well as a musical atmosphere; it is marvellous how he understands the human mind, the human soul. He can literally play on both. Ten years ago, I said to some friends that this man would some day become a great statesman, and they laughed; but now they see. Yet I cannot understand how he can close his piano as they say he has done for good. I could not. I might make such a vow, but if I shut my piano's lid down forever today, I'd open it tomorrow!"

Again we both laughed.

"But when I go to hear a pianist," he resumed, "I put myself entirely out of my own mind. You must lose your own point of view utterly if you are a pianist hearing another play; otherwise you are only somebody terribly out of place, and you enjoy nothing. You would want to be doing it yourself, whatever it was. For instance, I enjoyed so much hearing Busoni play; and yet I suppose there is not a player alive whose style is more totally different from mine; his type of mind, the way he works out his musical thought, his whole temperament is absolutely different. But when I heard him, I put my own ideas completely out of the way and felt with his feeling."

"You care much for the modern composers, do you not?" he was asked.

Wants No Epochal Composers

"Stravinsky, Debussy, Ravel and other moderns have influenced me a great deal,"



Arthur Rubinstein, Brilliant Polish Pianist

he answered. Stravinsky attracts me because he lost that stupid sense of importance of epochs; he is the property of all time; and so it should be. A thousand years from now, Music will be just as great as it is now. Stravinsky, it is true, writes in the Russian idiom, but his ideas are world ideas."

"I shall be glad now to go to Europe for a while," Mr. Rubinstein said, referring to his approaching journey. "In London, I expect to meet that wonderful friend of mine, Joseph Conrad, who, born a Pole, still is one of the greatest masters of Eng-

lish alive. I am tremendously proud of him."

"And he of his fellow-countryman, perhaps?"

He shook his head, smiling.

"A mere pianist, what is he beside Conrad? But still, I do not want to deride my instrument. When violinists and singers scoff at the piano, it amuses me. To me, it is the greatest instrument of them all; the most complete, the one able to produce the most varying wonderful effects."

CLARE PEELER.

INSURGENTS RISE IN RANKS OF THE MOZART SOCIETY

New York Euphony Society Formed by Dissatisfied Members of Musical Society

The dissonance that has come to life through striking organizations in various parts of the world has apparently spread to the social musical organizations of New York. The New York Euphony Society is the latest "insurgent" to strike out from the parent body into a musical life of its own. Officers of the new organization and a portion of its membership come from the Mozart Society of which Mrs. Noble McConnell is president.

The Euphony Society is headed by Mrs. James J. Gormley of Brooklyn. It will give its first concert at the Waldorf on Nov. 21, when Mme. Galli-Curci will ap-

pear. Other soloists announced for the course are Mme. Frances Alda in February and John McCormack in April. Mrs. Gormley denied herself to interviews when she was asked to make a statement on the reason for her withdrawal from the Mozart Society.

Mrs. McConnell, also, declined to make any comment, beyond her belief that New York could not have too many music clubs. "I am conscious of no inharmony," she said. "Mozart never was more prosperous. We have 600 members and our roster shows fewer resignations this year than any other. I have the office of my club here in my suite. We are in negotiation with Mischa Elman and other artists. I don't care to say more."

Madame Ruano Bogislav (Mrs. Riccardo Martin), will appear in a series of costume recitals in New York this season featuring a new group of Gypsy songs. This recital is to be followed by an appearance in London.

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