By Samuel Chotzinoff.

# The Incomparable Artur Rubinstein

## A Conversation

The great pianist Artur Rubinstein loves music. Offhand that seems like a riduculous statement about a famous and much beloved artist. The general opinion is that all musicians love music. Yet to such an extent is this alleged love of music honored in the breach that the artist who truly loves music is the exception. I have had a life-long association with many noted and popular musical performers, and among them I have found very few exceptions. The reason for the general indifference of musical artists to music is rather obvious. Performing artists master their art (or; in some cases, trade?) at an early age, and by the time they have achieved fame and a career music has become an old, an unexciting story for them. Though they must continue to practice a good deal in order to keep in trim and meet competition, they seldom play, sing or conduct for pleasure. And outside of their own speciality they appear to have little, if any, interest in other performers and in other forms of music.

Rubinstein seriously and passionately loves music and music-making. He goes to other people's concerts as often as his own busy schedule permits. Most often performers attend concerts for some purpose other than to enjoy the performance. The widow of Enrico Caruso once told me that her celebrated

husband occasionally attended a song recital or an opera performance in order to gauge the merits or the demerits of a possible rival. He and Mrs. Caruso would slip into gallery seats so as not to be recognized, and remain until the great tenor could estimate fully the abilities of the man he had come to hear. That never took more than about ten minutes. Caruso, his wife recalled, left the hall or the opera house with a smile of satisfaction on his face.

Artur Rubinstein is not concerned about possible rivals. He is ready and eager to listen to fellow artists or to make music himself at any hour of the day or night. He loves Chamber music, and he has found the secret of blending the percussive tone of the piano with the lyric tone of the strings. When the music is for strings alone, he listens enraptured. One day, after a performance of Schubert's String Quintet at a private house, he was so moved that he went up to the first violinist and handed him, with every evidence of emotion, five twenty dollar bills. "I felt I had to do something to express my gratitude for such divine music and such a beautiful performance", he said apologetically.

"I cannot tell you," he tells me, "how much I love to play for people. Would you believe it, sometimes when I sit down to practice and there is no one else in the room, I have to stifle an impulse to ring for the elevator man and offer him

money to come in and hear me? I am happy to play to a crowded Carnegie Hall. But I am just as happy to play for a thousand people, for three hundred, for a hundred, indeed for any one who cares to listen. Just look at this schedule," and he showed me his engagement book for the coming summer, so pencilled in with names of cities that it looks like a railroad schedule. Most performers rest in the summer. But Rubinstein, after a taxing winter of concertising, booked himself solidly for a summer tour of Europe; playing almost daily. It is a schedule that would strain the endurance of the youngest artist. Rubinstein, at the age of seventy-three, is certain to take it in his stride, and come through it exhilerated in body and mind.

Now he sits facing me in the library of his duplex apartment on Park Avenue. His face is actually still boyish, and his puckish smile, with its suggestion of harmless sophistication, reflects the ageless vitality, awareness, and hedonism of this extraordinary man. He has just returned from a prolonged recording session, and he should be dog tired, ready for supper and bed. But he isn't at all tired; or, if he had been tired earlier, he no longer is. The prospect of talking about music has revitalized him, and he says he is ready, even eager, for a long evening with me.

I remind him that I first heard him play in Mexico City some forty years ago, long before he made a great name for himself in America. The house was packed and the audience rose

in a body and cheered when he came on the stage. At the end of the program there were shouts of "Navarro", "Sevilla", "Cordoba", and other pieces by Albeniz, all then quite new to me, but favorites with the audience. Hearing him play this music I realized that the youthful Polish pianist had an extraordinary affinity with Spanish rhythms and Spanish musical coloring, more so, indeed, than a Spanish or Latin-American artist might have. Rubinstein's playing of Spanish music was the recognizable expression of the Spanish soul. The encores he was made to play were endless. And when the concert was finally over, Rubinstein was carried to his hotel on the shoulders of hysterical Mexicans. When I returned to New York and reported the astonishing success of Rubinstein, someone jokingly remarked that the Mexicans probably thought they were hearing Anton Rubinstein, not Artur.

Laughing at his own expense at this anecdote, Artur Rubinstein tried to explain to me the reason for his success in Mexico. "Very early in my career I showed an affinity for Spanish music. In 1915 Spain adopted me, you know, in the way America adopted Paderewski. I learned things very quickly in those days. It took me three weeks to learn all the twelve pieces of Albenizes "Iberia". Albeniz did not know the resources of the piano too well, and he wrote often in an awkward way. So I had to fix up his music to suit my fingers and tomake his

unimaginative Spanish vignettes 'sound', as we say. Have you tired to play "Navarro" as Albeniz wrote it? You'll find it impossible. It is not only finger-breaking, it is ineffective. The same is true of Stravinsky"s "Petronschka". Stravinsky wrote a piano version of "Petronchka" especially for me. And this too, I was obliged to fix up. Well, the Spaniards were enraptured, also the South Americans, and even the French, with the way I played Spanish music. But I must confess that while I was happy to give pleasure with Spanish music my heart really belonged more to the classics, old and new, to Bach, Mozart, Beethoven, Schubert, Schumann, Chopin. It also belonged to the impressionists, to Debussy, Ravel, and to our Polish Symanowski. I spent years introducing the music of Symanowski when his name was hardly known outside of Poland."

Rubinstein's speech, like his piano playing, is alive with nuances. What he says is always spontaneous, his ideas and opinions are his own, never second-hand. His broad, humanistic culture is certainly a rarity in this age of specialization. It comprises a knowledge and appreciation of the history and the arts of many diverse civilizations. Like Oliver Goldsmith's Chinese diplomate, Rubinstein is a citizen of the world, rather than of a country. He is equally at home in New York, Warsaw, Paris, Rome, Madrid, The Hague, Brussells, Monaco, Jerusalem, Lima, Buenes Aires, Rio and Santiago; and he used to be at home in Berlin before the Germans took to the grisly sport of genocide.

There is hardly a language that he does not speak fluently. In his gentures he "suits the action to the words". He uses his hands vividly, and his dissents are generally and amiably prefaced with "but my dear fellow..." in the English manner, which he makes sound persuasive rather than patronizing. As one listens to him and watches his graceful, illustrative gestures and scans his curiously shaped head with its receding tough, curly hair, his sharp, small, probing eyes, one feels in the presence of a man absolutely different from the generality, a throw-back to a once elegant, original species now, but for him, extinct. He is, indeed, or appears to be, the sole survivor of the poet-musician type, a blend of charm, naivete, sophistication, knowledge and genius, the type forever symbolized by Byron and Liszt.

"When I look back on my life," Rubinstein is reflectively saying, "I see myself as two men, one different from the other. The man before, and the man after marriage." I remembered catching sight of the first man, the bachelor Rubinstein, in a Paris restaurant many years ago. It was the night of the famous Quatre Arts ball. On that night, as on St. John's Eve in Germany centuries ago, or in the Fasching season to this day in Munich, all the accumulated restraints of civilization may be discarded, the celebrants permitting themselves freedoms normally prohibited or frowned on. Artur Rubinstein (accompanied by Jascha Heifetz) wore an armless, full length, bizarre garment,

underneath which one caught glimpses of the white skin of the wearer. Persons equally unrobed or disrobed, wandered in, seemingly unconscious of their strange appearance. Unorthodox behavior by the students and their guests at the ball was hinted at in the next mornings papers. One could picture the carefree bachelor pianist as an unhibited participator in the Quatre Arts' pagan revels. It was reported that, in the early hours of the morning, Rubinstein and Heifetz stopped on their way home for refreshments at a night spot in Monmartre, and that in a spirit of fun, they took over the chores of the establishment's violinist and pianist and played for hours to the delight of the patrons.

"Those were happy times," Rubinstein mused wistfully. "How different from the strained gaiety of to-day! When we dance these days, it is in desperations, as if over a volcano, really a _dans Macabre_, an uneasy dance like Ravel's "La Valse". Any, you know, my dear fellow, this feeling of a volcano beneath us is the reason why our modern composers write the way they do. They are afraid of life, and they take refuge in noise, in sterilit in destruction. They ignore the soul of man, which has not died, but has been temporarily obscured by a cloud; they write from panic, to keep from feeling anything. It is the same nowadays in all the arts."

"But the true artist does not ignore the soul, no matter what the outward state of the world,may be at the moment. In

the darkest years of the Xzars the great Russian artists - Pushkin, Lermentov, Gogol, Tolstoy, Turgenev, - celebrated the Russian soul. Flowers grow even from a dung heap. The true artist is always an optimist because he is dealing with the soul of man, not the superficialities of life. And all true art is romantic because the divine essence of man is forever mysterious, forever beautiful. Does this sound banal to you? If it does I can't help it. I know no other way to say it. And I'll remind you that it is proclaimed with all romantic music. Of course it is said there better than I say it to you."

"An artist knows that life is romantic because anything at all may happen. You remember that song in Rodger's and Hammerstein's "South Pacific"? I forget what it is called, something about looking across a crowded room and seeing, unexpectedly, for the first time, the girl of your dreams. You know, my dear fellow, though that is a romantic idea it is what one always hopes for. Any evening may prove to be the enchanted one. Every day may bring adventure. I have felt that way all my life. That is why I love to go out. There is always the possibility of meeting some one who will open a new window on the world, the commonplace world you've known. Just as there are no two finger prints alike so there are no two persons alike. I have known many great and important men and women in my time who have contributed immensely to my understanding

and appreciation of life. But the mailman, the elevator man, the cook, the charwoman, I find exciting too, for they are highly individual, each one of them, and each has a point of view different from the others and from mine. Yes, I find most people exciting."

"I am so busy living my life that I can't seem to find time to write about it. But if I ever do an autobiography I shall call it "A Fairy Tale", because that is what it has always been. It is a fairy tale right now. Even before I was born something remarkable happened to me. Let me tell you about it. I was my mother's seventh child. My mother did not want a seventh child, so she decided to get rid of me before I was born. Then a marvelous thing happened. My aunt dissuaded her, and so I was permitted to be born. Think of it, my dear fellow! It was a miracle. And as if to show my gratitude for my debut in the world, right away I began to show an aptitude for music. You see, I wasted no time. When I was a year old, believe it or not, I could carry a tune, and at four I played the overture to "Poet and Peasant" four hands with my sister--you know that delightful, melodious piece, so seldom performed nowadays, that goes "Tah-tah-ta-ta-ta.....ta-ta-ta?" On my fifth birthday somebody presented me with calling cards on which were printed "Arturic, pianist virtuoso." Arturic was my family's pet name for me. I was, of course, enchanted with the cards and passed them around freely to friends and even strangers. You see,

I never had any false modesty. I was sure of myself. I had perfect pitch, indeed I had everything necessary for a musician. But you know! I was not really interested in music. I have to confess my ambition then was to shine in baby athletics!"

"My uncle, who was a very cultured man, saw my musical possibilities and felt I had no time to lose, that I couldn't begin my career too soon. So at four he arranged for me to play for the famous violinist Huberman. Huberman was impressed with my playing and wrote a letter to the great violinist Josef Joachim in Berlin, telling him all about me. And, fairy tale again, the great man wrote back a long letter warning my uncle that a talented child must not be forced. "Don't," he cautioned, "make a monkey of him, and see to it that he listens to good music only, especially to good singing, and don't let him take lessons before he is six." Joachim ended the letter with a hope that the child could be brought to Berlin to play for him."

Here Rubinstein's face broke into an amused, a dimpled smile.

"Fairy tale again," he continued. "Listen. It so happened that my sister was about to be married. In those days Polish people considered Berlin--not Paris--the proper place to buy the bride's trousseau, and my mother was taking my sister to Berlin to buy her one. I was taken along to meet Joachim. And that, my dear fellow, marked the turning point of my life."

In Berlin, Joachim received little Arturic cordially and put him through a severe musical test. He made him play a tune in several keys. Then Joachim sang the second theme of the first movement of Schubert's "Unfinished" symphony and asked the boy to improvise an accompaniment. This Rubinstein, without hesitation, did, and Joachim was enthusiastic and suggested, rather whimsically, that the lad be taught the violin. When the Rubinsteins returned to Lodz the boy was given a violin. But Arturic had no patience with the instrument and smashed it to bits at the earliest opportunity. He willingly took piano lessons, and at the age of six gave a charity concert, playing among other things a Beethoven Sonata, a waltz by Chopin and Mendelssohn's "Spinning Song". When he finished the printed program he improvised.

Soon the child Rubinstein outgrew the pedagogic opportunities of Lodz and was sent to Warsaw to study at the Conservatory. When he was ten he was sent to Berlin again. He was now sufficiently advanced to be regarded as an artist. Joachim openly took him under his protection, and with the financial aid of himself and three Jewish bankers the young artist's education was guaranteed. He studied with Heinrich Bart, a pupil of Van Buelow, and a very severe teacher indeed. Bart's pupils usually left the classroom in tears. Once he dismissed a young American student with the query, "You wouldn't have me rob your parents, would you?"

In those days Berlin was the stronghold of the partisans of Schumann and Brahms. Like his teacher, Bart and his sponsor, Joachim, Rubinstein declared himself on the side of the classicists and against the revolutionary school of Wagner and Liszt. When he was eleven Rubinstein made his Berlin debut with Mozart's A Major Concerto, Joachim conducting the orchestra. At the same time he pursued his studies with Bart and dutifully attended the rehearsals of the famous Joachim String Quartet and thus, early in life, learned to know and love the classics of chamber music. But he distinctly recalls falling asleep at a performance of Beethoven's Quartet, Op. 131. "I still do," Rubinstein smilingly admitted.

Rubinstein's mother wanted her son to be brought up under the refining influence of feminine society, so in Berlin she placed him in a pension for girls. Artur came under the refining influence his mother so desired for him, with a vengeance. He acknowledges (with a twinkle in his eye) that he has to this day not recovered from that influence. Like Lord Byron, who fell in love at the age of seven, the boy Rubinstein promptly conceived a passion for a girl of twenty, who lived at his pension. In an effort to bridge the disparity in their ages, Rubinstein, unaware at that time of the levelling power of his art, sought to become proficient in more manly pursuits such as riding a horse. After many lessons and several falls, he

paraded his new accomplishment before his lady love, who, Rubinstein recalls, was annoyed rather than impressed, and hardly deigned to look his way. His passion being discovered by the pension authorities, his "inamorata" was asked to leave, and Rubinstein saw her no more. Twenty years later she visited him backstage after one of his concerts. The pianist choked with emotion on recognizing the object of his childhood infatuation. "Now occurred another miracle," Rubinstein says with a fervor that annihilated a period of forty years since the meeting in the green-room, "for the lady spoke of my youthful passion and confessed her infatuation for me. The disparity in our ages did not seem so serious an obstacle as it had been twenty years earlier. I guess that was the miracle."

Reverting to his memories of his youth Artur Rubinstein sadly shakes his head at his irreconcilable states of mind at the age of sixteen. Piano playing came easily to him. "Therefore," he says, "a pianist was for me a very inferior being." A composer was several cuts above a pianist in his estimation, but a formidable obstacle stood in the way of his composing music. "I was too good a musician to compose second-rate music," he confesses, "and it was not easy to be first-rate." To cap his generally disturbed state of mind he found himself constantly in love, and was obliged, perforce, to devote much of his time to the problems and anxieties of that imperious emotion. At the same time he could not help being caught up in the musical war that raged so violently in the capitals of Europe at the turn

of the century. It was a conflict that parted friends, severed relationships, set father against son, teacher against pupil. The musical cleavage was sharp; one was wither for Wagner, Liszt and Richard Strauss, or for Schumann and Brahms. To be for all five was unthinkable. For a youth of sixteen the choice was clear. Notwithstanding his obligation tohhis teacher Bart and his friend and sponsor Joachim, Rubinstein now espoused the cause of the Romantics.

His protege's rebellion against Classicism did not disturb Joachim's faith in Rubinstein's talent and he continued to use his considerable influence to further the young man's career. Through his good offices Paderewski invited Rubinstein to visit him in Morges, Switzerland where the celebrated pianist had his home and lived in baronial style and splendor. Paderewski received his visitor cordially. At Paderewski's request, Rubinstein played for him. He was nervous and played badly, but his host sensed his quality and pressed him to stay a week. At a large party he gave that evening Paderewski had Rubinstein play for his guests, and this time the young man played so brilliantly that "Le Maitra", as Paderewski was called, was enchanted with him and kissed him on both cheeks. Mrs. Padewewski, Rubinstein recalls with amusement, was less charming, permitting herself rude remarks about him like "the boy eats well at table." "And," Rubinstein adds, "she was right, I did eat well at table. And, if you've noticed, I still do! It was nevertheless a most profitable stay, for among the guests at the party was the

influential Boston music critic, Apthorp. When Mr. Apthorp returned to America he spoke glowingly about Rubinstein to the Knabe piano people who thereupon arranged an American tour for him. Rubinstein was seventeen when he made his American debut.

"Yes," Rubinstein says recalling those far-away days; "I suppose I was brilliant, how do you say, "flashy"? as pianist Otherwise why should allsorts of people have engaged me to play in all sorts of important places? Astruc in Paris signed me up for five years, and I made my debut there in a notable series of concerts called "Le Grande Auditions de France". Mary Garden was the assisting artist and she sang three Debussy gongs in French with an American accent. These opportunities came, I think, prematurely for me. I was gay, always in love, and most disinclined to practice; so it really was not surprising that the critics said I was not well prepared. I wasn't. You know the A minor etude of Chopin, the fast one? Well, I played it and missed ninety percent of the notes. But it was successfully bravura, and it impressed the audience, though not the critics. My difficulty in my young days was that I had so much vitality and dash that I could get away with, as you say, murder."

At this point, Rubinstein's fifteen year old son Johnny came into the room and said, "Mother asked me to deliver three messages. First, you are to offer the chocolates to your guest. Second, how soon will the interview be finished? And third, shall the ladies come down?" To which Rubinstein, smiling,

answered, "first, tell you mother I shall offer chocolates to my guest when I find them. Seoond, I don't know how soon the interview will be over, and third, the ladies maynnot come down just yet." The boy, grinning, left. "Charming lad." his father observed. "He has a sense of humor, I think. Now, where were we?"

"You had just gotten away with murder," I said.

"Ah, yes. As I told you in 1915 I went to Spain and the Spanish people adopted me completely. I must say I played Spanish music in such a way that my audiences found it hard to resist me. And that, my dear fellow, was a tragedy for me. For the public accepts the artist who flatters their national prejudices, while they ignore the better things he ought to offer them. I gave them what they wanted in the way they wanted, and I had a big success. But there was a void in my heart. Musically speaking I was leading a double life. At home, in my hotel room, I was a different type. I loved the classics, the music of Bach, Beethoven and so forth. I knew I could, how do you say "Wow"? any audience with DeFalla's "Fire Dance", but I would rather "wow" them with Beethoven's austere "Hammerklavier" Sonata. And, like all persons who lead a double life I was happy only on the surface."

"Outwardly I was a man to be envied. My facility on the piano was incredible (my technique, however, was questionable. I remember once in Rio I ran into the great pianist Godowsky in

the lobby of my hotel. 'I'm coming to hear you to-night' Godowsky said, beaming. I blanched. 'Please, please, don't come,' I implored, 'it is impossible to fake in front of you'. That should give you an idea, my dear fellow, how unsure my technique was in those days.)

"As I said, outwardly I was enviable. I spoke many languages fluently. I was socially adaptable. Everywhere I was taken up by 'society'. In England I received large fees for playing in private houses - two hundred pounds, in fact, which in those days was a large fee, indeed. But I was too lazy, too comfortable to practice and I dropped as many notes as I played. My second tour of America in the 1920's was a personal triumph and an artistic disaster. I knew everybody, I dined out, I was side-traced by pretty girls and beautiful women, and all this took up so much of my time and energy that I neglected the piano. The critics sensed this and were critical - all but you, my dear fellow. You wrote kindly about me because you felt the artist in me, notwithstanding the dropped notes. I was distinctly <u>not</u> a success in my second American venture and I assumed that I should never return."

"Well, I grew older, I had an ever-increasing success in Europe and in Latin America, and an ever-increasing ache in my heart for the pianist I wanted to be but wasn't. I had never thought seriously about marriage; marriage was a curtailment of liberty, of that happy condition in which one is not obliged to account for one's actions. Then, all of a sudden,

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something happened to me, something changed me, and I found myself wanting two things desperately.

"I said tommyself: "look here Rubinstein, this won't do You must, before you die, exploit your real gifts as a pianist. Suddenly, also, I began to dream of having a daughter of my own. Why these two desires began to haunt me I cannot say. But they did, and they seemed to have some sort of interdependence, For I reasoned that if I had a daughter I certainly wouldn't want to let her down, I mean I would for her sake want to be the fine pianist I longed to be. So, in anticipation of this future daughter, I began to practice the piano seriously. God should have punished me for my having sowed my wild oats over such a long period. But God was as the moment kindly disposed towards me, or else He was busy elsewhere. To enable me to realize my two dreams He led me to marry a lovely, beautiful woman I had been in love with for some years. Most fortunately and unaccountably she loved me too. In due course she gave me the daughter I longed for, and also provided the orderly life a serious artist requires. I began to practice and study the piano whole-heartedly and methodically for the first time in my life. My wife, by her sympathy and her ministrations - to say nothing of her cooking - she is one of the world's great cooks and she loves to cook in the same way I love to play the piano - and my little daughter, by her mere presence, gave me

the respect for my talent as a pianist which I longed to have and never had 'till then."

Rubinstein got up to look for the chocolates, and after a fruitless search sat down again.

"Nella was a young girl when she married me and I was forty-three," he went on. "It was a serious thing, my dear fellow, a courageous thing for a man of forty-three to marry a very young girl. It is one thing for the young girl to meet the ageing man at a party, when he is all dressed up, nicely shaved, his grey, diminishing hair combed and brushed, or to visit him in the artist's rooms after a concert, his face still aglow with the music of Beethoven or Chopin. But it is quite another thing for her to see him in the morning in his pyjamas, unshaved, uncombed and bleary-eyed. Yes, my dear fellow, it took great courage for me to ask a beautiful young woman to marry me. Believe me, it is easier to play the whole of "Petrouchka" on the piano. But the result was magnificent, at least it was for me. I became the father of two girls and two boys, lovely children - by good fortune they all look like my wife. I worked hard at my piano and I went back to America quite a different artist from what I was when I last played there. The public took me to their hearts, and even the critics began to say kind things about my playing. Since my marriage, I live in a dream of fullfilment - as artist, as husband and as father. In short, my dear fellow, I consider myself blest."

Johnny again appeared in the doorway. "You may tell your mother," Rubinstein said anticipating his son's second message, "first, I can't find the chocolates, second, the interview is about over, and third, we are ready now to receive the ladies."

Johnny vanished, and a moment later Mrs. Rubinstein, my wife and two other ladies, friends of the Rubinsteins, came down, Mrs. Rubinstein found the chocolates easily, and brought out other refreshments. Showing no sign of fatigue, Rubinstein entertained the company with stories and anecdotes, many of them witty, all of them revealing his keen relish of the sentient world, his unflagging ebbulience, his deep interest in people and in everything that affects them.

Himself an irrepressible romantic he deplored the complete frustration of emotional life in the young people of to-day. Yet he understands its cause and refuses to blame the youngsters.

"Our young people laugh at emotion because of the sterile, difficult life of the world around them. The cruelty of this life is expressed in the cruelty and cynicism of our literature, our noisey, meaningless music, the emotionless abstractions of our art," he said with great seriousness. He has no hesitation in identifying the cause of the perilous state of the world and its deleterious effect on the creative spirit. "Germany is responsible for it all. The two wars they instigated have not only destroyed countless millions, they have also infected the souls of the survivors. That is why I deliberately lose myself

in the generous, romantic, liberalizing creations of the great masters of music. Any my success as an interpreter of this music - it would be silly of me to be modest and pretend I'm not a success, wouldn't it? - proves to me that beneath the cruelty and cynicism that have so infected the world, our need for emotional release is most urgent. You see, my dear fellow, I am an incurable optimist. I simply cannot believe that the culture mankind has accumulated over the centuries is for nothing, that the sould of man is destructible, that our beautiful world is doomed to perish."

"As for myself, I shallggo on playing as long as any one wants to hear me, or until my fingers fail me and my heart dries up, or until I am attacked by dry-as-dust doctrinarism, you know, the sort of artistic disease that causes one to play as if a metrome was ceaselessly ticking off the time, the kind that substitutes the brain for the heart when playing Beethoven. I hate musical straight-jackets and I never shall put one on. Johnny, have you done your homework? If not, you may excuse yourself. But first, I would like you to play for us. Johnny plays the piano rather well, I think."

Smiling diffidently Johnny went to the piano and played pieces by Bach and Poulenc. His father watched him nervously and stole glances at me to assure himself of my favorable reaction. The boy played charmingly, with a limpid tone and excellent taste. "And now, off to your homework," Rubinstein commanded gently.

Johnny said good-night, kissed his parents and went upstairs. "What a delightful boy!" Rubinstein said, "so understanding, so sweet with me, and he does play the piano rather well, don't you think? Not that I would want him to be a travelling musician like his father. I don't believe he has the right kind of temperament. I have no idea just what he'll be, and it really won't matter. I am sure he will be a good, kind man, and that is what really matters, doesn't it?"

Other friends drifted in, though it was growing late. At four in the morning we broke up, Rubinstein protesting our "haste" to leave and assuring us he was not the least bit tired.

~~The quality of the pianist's charm, vivacity, magnetism and hospitality was summed up, I thought, by one of the guests, who said to her husband, "Why can't we have evenings like this at our house?"~~

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