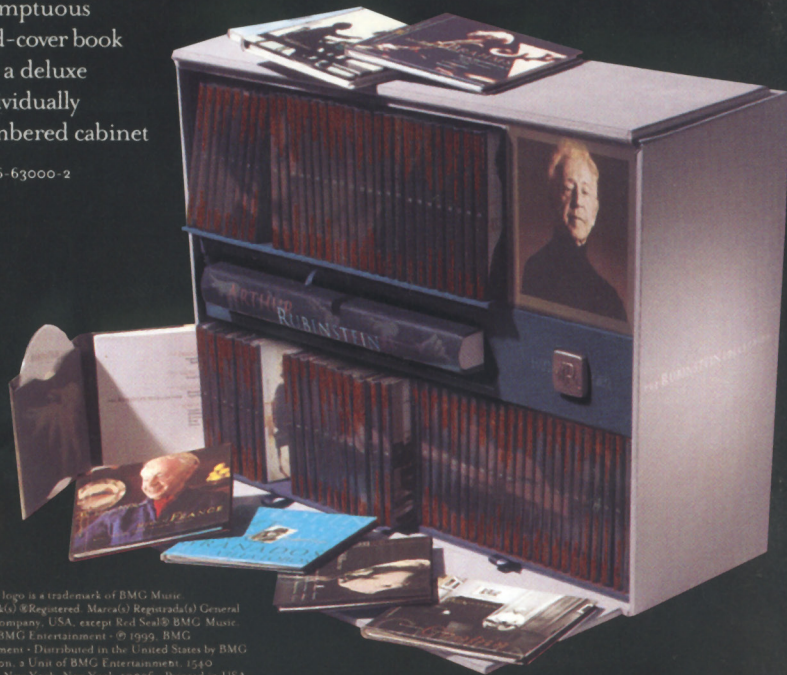


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RACH-

Rachmaninoff

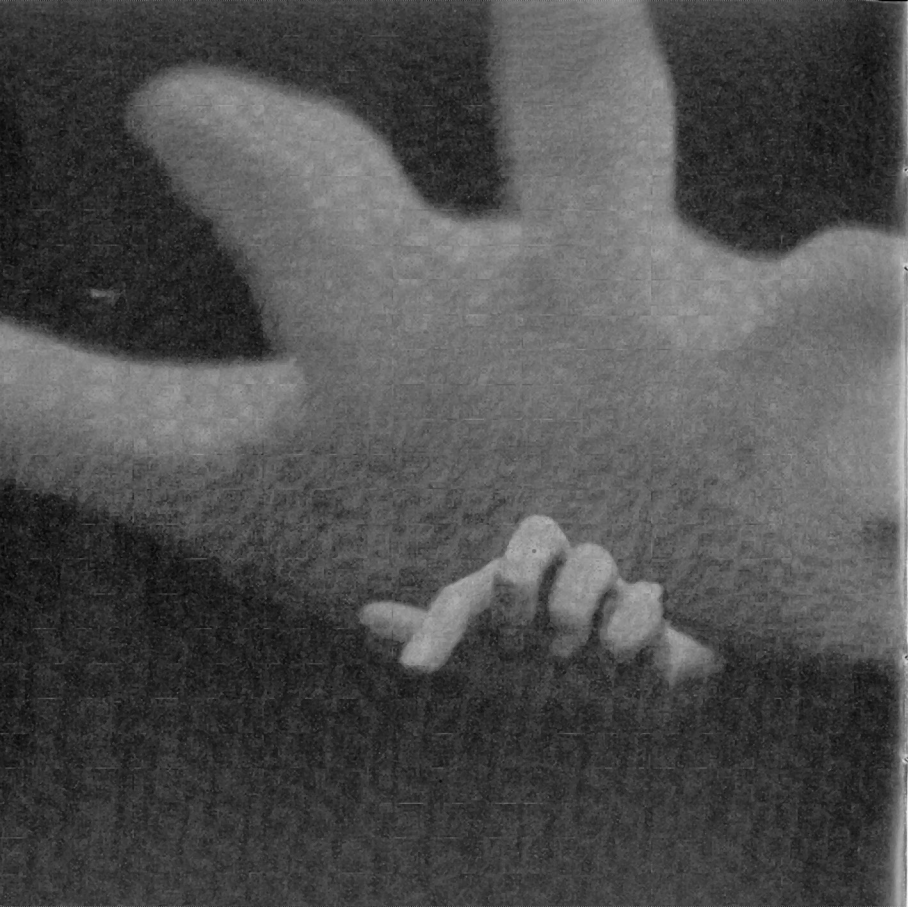
MANINOFF

ARTHUR
RUBINSTEIN

PIANO CONCERTO NO. 2

RHAPSODY ON A
THEME OF PAGANINI

Chicago Symphony Orchestra
Fritz Reiner



THE RUBINSTEIN COLLECTION

RACHMANINOFF

{1873-1943}

PIANO CONCERTO NO. 2, Op. 18

RHAPSODY ON A

THEME OF PAGANINI, Op. 43

Chicago Symphony Orchestra

Fritz Reiner, *conductor*

Prelude, Op. 3, no. 2

in C-sharp minor / cis-moll / ut dièse mineur

Arthur Rubinstein,
Fritz Reiner

Courtesy of ICM
Artists, Ltd.



Produced by Richard Mohr

Recording Engineer: Lewis Layton

Recorded in Orchestra Hall, Chicago

Prelude recorded in RCA Studios, Hollywood

Reissue produced by Nathaniel S. Johnson

Engineer: Thomas MacCluskey

Digitally remastered in BMG / RCA Studios, New York City

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PIANO CONCERTO NO. 2,
OP. 18

*in C minor / c-moll /
ut mineur* (33:08)

- 1 Moderato; Allegro (10:10)
2 Adagio sostenuto (11:48)
3 Allegro scherzando (11:00)
Recorded January 9, 1956

RHAPSODY ON A THEME OF
PAGANINI, OP. 43 (23:07)

- 4 Introduction (:07)
5 Variation I (:21)
6 Tema (:20)

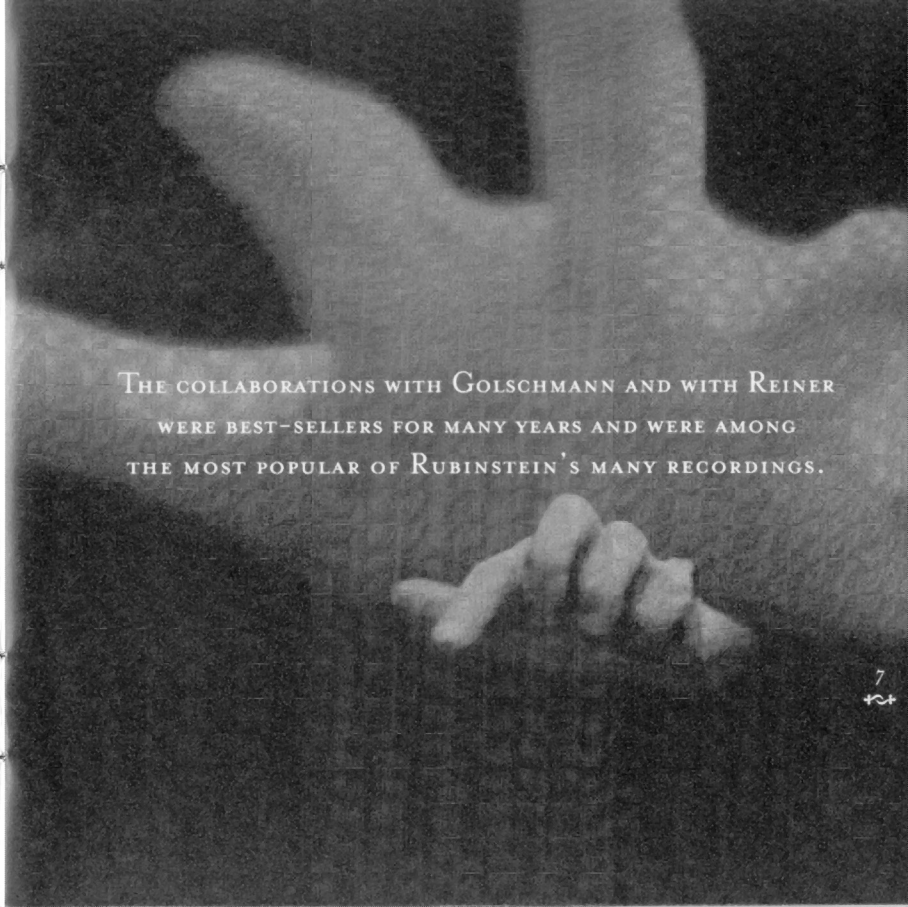
Variations

- | | | | |
|----|------------|----|------------------|
| 7 | II (:19) | 19 | XIV (:43) |
| 8 | III (:25) | 20 | XV (1:04) |
| 9 | IV (:30) | 21 | XVI (1:28) |
| 10 | V (:28) | 22 | XVII (1:45) |
| 11 | VI (1:01) | 23 | XVIII (3:14) |
| 12 | VII (:54) | 24 | XIX (:26) |
| 13 | VIII (:31) | 25 | XX (:35) |
| 14 | IX (:29) | 26 | XXI (:24) |
| 15 | X (:54) | 27 | XXII (1:39) |
| 16 | XI (1:28) | 28 | XXIII (:56) |
| 17 | XII (1:24) | 29 | XXIV (1:14) |
| 18 | XIII (:28) | | EMI Music, ASCAP |

Recorded January 16, 1956

- 30 Prelude, Op. 3, no. 2
*in C-sharp minor / cis-moll /
ut dièse mineur* (4:12)
Recorded December 11, 1950

DISC TIME: 60:38



THE COLLABORATIONS WITH GOLSCHMANN AND WITH REINER
WERE BEST-SELLERS FOR MANY YEARS AND WERE AMONG
THE MOST POPULAR OF RUBINSTEIN'S MANY RECORDINGS.

AS A WORK THAT ATTAINED WELL-DESERVED POPULARITY FOLLOWING ITS PREMIERE IN MOSCOW ON OCTOBER 27, 1901, RACHMANINOFF'S CONCERTO NO. 2 SOON ATTRACTED THE ATTENTION OF NUMEROUS PIANISTS. According to Arthur Rubinstein's biographer Harvey Sachs, Rubinstein first took up the Concerto during the 1908-09 season. The Warsaw Philharmonic had engaged Rubinstein for four concerto appearances, and the Rachmaninoff Second joined the Beethoven Fourth, Brahms First, and Chopin Second as part of the chosen repertoire. The Rachmaninoff then became one of the 25 or so works for piano and orchestra that Rubinstein played regularly throughout his long career.

8
+~+ It is thus curious that the Rachmaninoff Second was given little attention on recordings prior to its composer's death in 1943. Rachmaninoff himself recorded the Concerto twice—in 1924 and again in 1929, both times with Leopold Stokowski leading the Philadelphia Orchestra. His own interpretations possessed an undeniable, perhaps even intimidating, authority that may well have discouraged other pianists from committing

their performances to the permanence of discs. Only one other recording appeared during Rachmaninoff's lifetime: a warmly lyrical 1937 British release on HMV featuring Benno Moiseiwitsch as the soloist. However, the end of World War II and the use of themes from the Concerto in several motion pictures of the era launched a flood of additional recorded editions. Among these is the first of Rubinstein's three approved recordings of the work, conducted by Vladimir Golschmann and included in volume 15 of this Collection. It was preceded by a 1945 attempt by Rubinstein and conductor Leopold Stokowski that was apparently rejected because of mechanical difficulties. Rubinstein's re-recordings of the concerto date from 1956 (with Fritz Reiner and the Chicago Symphony, included herewith) and 1971 (with Eugene Ormandy and the Philadelphia Orchestra). The collaborations with Golschmann and with Reiner were best-sellers for many years and were among the most popular of Rubinstein's many recordings.

9
+~+ Rubinstein himself expressed great admiration for Rachmaninoff as a pianist, but somewhat less enthusiasm toward his compositional output. As Rubinstein expressed it in the second volume of his memoirs,

Rachmaninoff's works suffered from "a lack of nobility, which is the attribute of great music, but there is a sexual impact which tickles your musical senses." When he heard Rachmaninoff play, Rubinstein felt him to be "a pianist after my heart. He was superlative when he played his own music. A performance of his concertos could make you believe that they were the greatest masterpieces ever written, while when played by other pianists, even at their best, they became clearly what they were: brilliantly written pieces with their Oriental languor which have retained a great hold on the public.... In my opinion he was a greater pianist than a composer. I fall, I have to admit, under the charm of his compositions when I hear them but return home with a slight distaste for their too brazenly expressed sweetness."

Rachmaninoff was one of the few pianists Rubinstein admired virtually without reservation. "I was always under the spell of his glorious and inimitable tone," Rubinstein said. "When he played the music of other composers, he impressed me by the novelty and the originality of his conceptions. When he played Schumann or Chopin, even if it was contrary to my own feelings, he could convince me by the sheer impact of his personality.



Alfred Rubinstein

August 1950

He was the most fascinating pianist of them all since Busoni (1866-1924). He had the secret of the golden, living tone which comes from the heart."

The circumstances surrounding the composition of Rachmaninoff's Concerto No. 2 are by now so well known that they barely need restatement here. The failure of his Symphony No. 1 at its premiere in 1897—owing largely to the ineptitude of the conductor, not to any flaws in the work itself—sent Rachmaninoff into serious creative despair. Finally he sought therapy from a Dr. Nikolai Dahl, who practiced a primitive form of autosuggestion on the composer. It is likely that Dr. Dahl, as an amateur violinist and a man of considerable human sympathies, personally influenced Rachmaninoff as much as did his medical treatment. It was not long before Rachmaninoff embarked on his Second Concerto, completing the second and third movements in the autumn of 1900. A year later the entire work was premiered with outstanding success, and its publication bore a dedication to Dr. Dahl.

After his exile from Russia following the Bolshevik Revolution, Rachmaninoff launched a new career as a concert pianist, maintaining homes in the United States and in Switzerland. His output as a composer

diminished in quantity but not quality, and in the summer of 1934 he quickly wrote a set of 24 variations for piano and orchestra based on the last of Niccolò Paganini's solo violin caprices. He chose to label the piece "Rhapsody" rather than merely "Variations"; a clever inversion of the Paganini theme, transposed to D-flat Major, forms the famous 18th Variation, whose impact calls to mind the sweeping melodic writing of many of his earlier works. Rachmaninoff himself gave the premiere in Baltimore on November 7, 1934.

For his part, Arthur Rubinstein regarded the Rhapsody as both "difficult" and "diabolic," candidly admitting that it was a work "which I never dared to play while the composer was alive." The 1956 partnership with Reiner, included here, was preceded by a 1947 recording made in England with Walter Süsskind on the podium.

Completing this all-Rachmaninoff program is the second of Rubinstein's two recordings of the Prelude in C-Sharp Minor, the work which unquestionably qualifies as its composer's "greatest hit." Rachmaninoff was only 19 when the Prelude appeared in print alongside four other short pieces. The insatiable public demand for Rachmaninoff

to play the Prelude on every one of his recitals continued unabated until his dying day.

—Donald Manildi

Donald Manildi is Curator of the International Piano Archives (University of Maryland) and Consulting Editor of the International Piano Quarterly. He has also contributed a Rubinstein discography to Harvey Sachs' biography Rubinstein: A Life.



THE ARTHUR RUBINSTEIN COLLECTION

brings together all of his approved, commercially released recordings made between 1928 and 1976. They progress in approximate chronological order. All of the albums in The Arthur Rubinstein Collection were compiled from original sources. Disc-to-digital transfers were made, whenever possible, directly from metal stampers. Tape sources were transferred through CELLO playback electronics and remastered in 20-bit technology using universally compatible UV22™ Super CD Encoding.

