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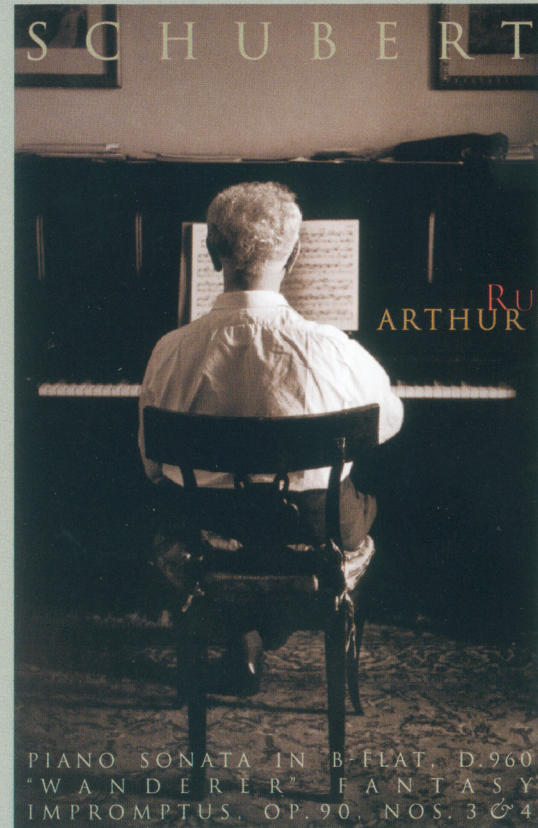
THE ARTHUR RUBINSTEIN COLLECTION A LIFE IN MUSIC

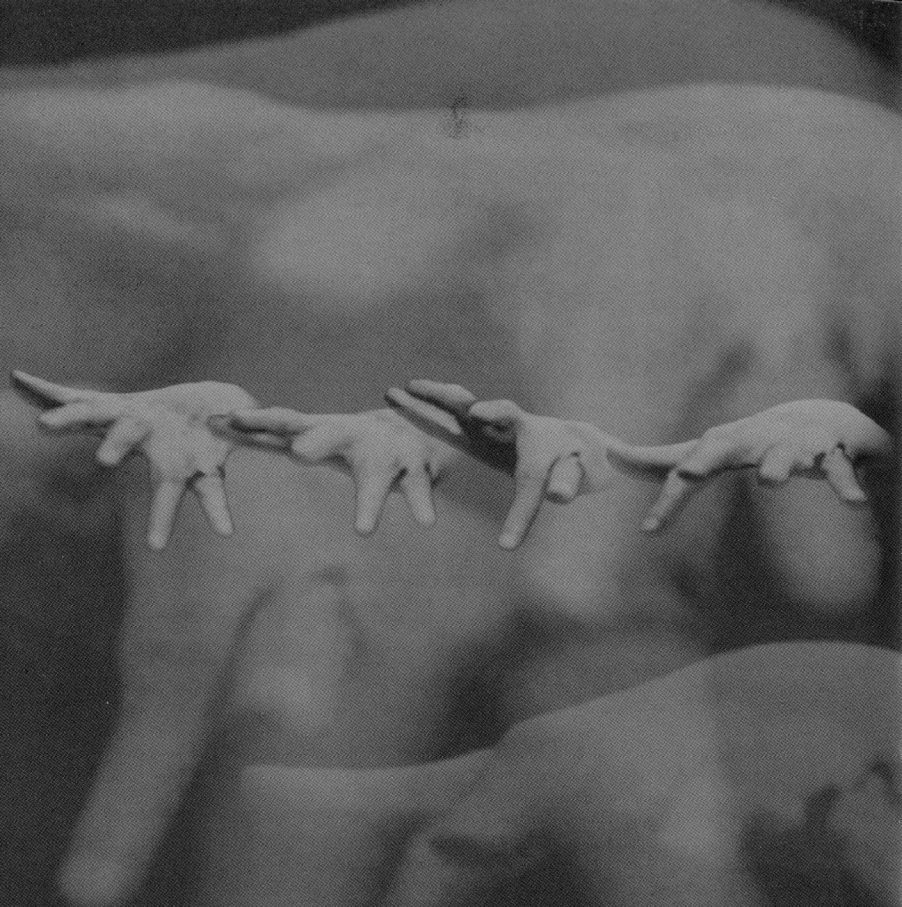
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{1797-1828}

SCHUBERT *Franz*
THE RUBINSTEIN COLLECTION

PIANO SONATA, Op. posth., D. 960
in B-flat / B-dur / si bémol majeur

FANTASIE, Op. 15, D. 760 ("Wanderer")

2 IMPROMPTUS

Op. 90, nos. 3 & 4, D. 899



Produced by Max Wilcox

Recording Engineers: Sergio Marcotulli, Anthony Salvatore

"Wanderer" *Fantasia and Sonata, D. 960*, recorded in

RCA Italiana Studios, Rome

Impromptus recorded in the American Academy of

Arts and Letters, New York City

Reissue produced by Nathaniel S. Johnson

Engineer: Thomas MacCluskey

Digitally remastered in BMG / RCA Studios, New York City

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PIANO SONATA, D. 960

in B-flat / B-dur /

si bémol majeur (35:57)

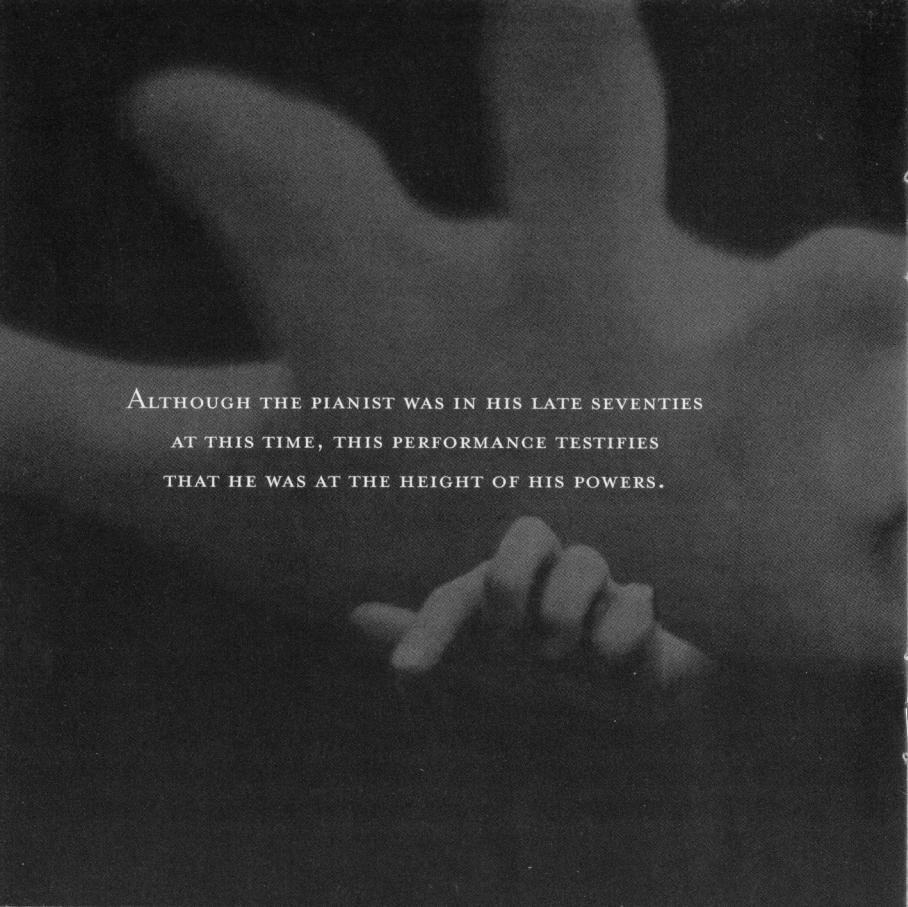
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|----|---|--|
| 1 | Molto moderato (14:17) | |
| 2 | Andante sostenuto (9:24) | |
| 3 | Scherzo: Allegro vivace con
delicatezza (4:12) | |
| 4 | Allegro, ma non troppo (7:49)
Recorded April 22, 1965 | |
| 5 | Allegro con fuoco,
ma non troppo (6:08) | |
| 6 | Adagio (6:55) | |
| 7 | Presto (4:38) | |
| 8 | Allegro (3:32)
Recorded April 20 & 21, 1965 | |
| 9 | Impromptu, Op. 90, no. 3
<i>in G-flat / Ges-dur /</i>
<i>sol bémol majeur (6:06)</i> | |
| 10 | Impromptu, Op. 90, no. 4
<i>in A-flat / As-dur /</i>
<i>la bémol majeur (6:43)</i>
Recorded March 23, 1961 | |

FANTASIE, OP. 15, D. 760

("WANDERER")

in C / C-dur / ut majeur

(21:14)



ALTHOUGH THE PIANIST WAS IN HIS LATE SEVENTIES
AT THIS TIME, THIS PERFORMANCE TESTIFIES
THAT HE WAS AT THE HEIGHT OF HIS POWERS.

ARTHUR RUBINSTEIN ESTABLISHED HIS GREAT REPUTATION PRIMARILY THROUGH PERFORMANCES OF CHOPIN AND BRAHMS, AND SECONDARILY WITH BEETHOVEN, THE EARLY FRENCH MODERNISTS AND SPANISH MUSICIANS. He is little associated with the music of Schubert, and, in fact, had only a small number of this composer's works in his repertory. Yet Rubinstein cherished Schubert's music from an early age and remained devoted to it throughout his long career. In his autobiography, Rubinstein named Schubert as one of "the nucleus of composers whom I played in public all my life." On another occasion, he declared that his heart most belonged to a core group of classical masters that included Schubert.

Rubinstein's deep affection for Schubert's music extended beyond the composer's piano solos. He loved Schubert's chamber music—not only the piano trios, both of which he performed and recorded, but also the string quartets and quintets, and even the Octet for strings and winds. The C Major Quintet was especially dear to him. In the first volume of his autobiography (*My Young Years*, Knopf, 1973), Rubinstein recounts hearing this work for the first time at a private reading given in London in 1913 by a stellar international ensemble that included the distinguished cellist Pablo Casals, the French

violinist Jacques Thibaud, and the English violist Lionel Tertis. "My emotion at hearing it is indescribable," Rubinstein wrote of the Quintet. "All I can say is that ever since that night my desire is to be escorted, at the hour of my death, by the sound, real or imaginary, of its heavenly Adagio's peace and resignation." Rubinstein also enjoyed an intimate knowledge of Schubert's songs. During his youth he occasionally accompanied singer friends in performances of the *Winterreise* cycle, the *Erlkönig* and others of Schubert's *lieder*. When no singers were on hand, he would render the songs as piano solos at private gatherings.

In view of this, the relatively small number of Schubert's keyboard compositions in Rubinstein's repertory might seem surprising. But Schubert's instrumental works in general, and his piano sonatas in particular, were not well known or appreciated during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, when Rubinstein was coming of age as a musician. Indeed, it was not until Arthur Schnabel began to perform them extensively, in the 1920s and 1930s, that the sonatas became recognized as the important compositions they are. Rubinstein performed only one Schubert sonata in public, this being the composer's last piano composition, the Sonata in B-Flat Major, D. 960. The pianist had undoubtedly known this piece for many years, but he did not add the sonata to his active repertory until the early 1960s, when he was past the age of seventy.

Rubinstein recorded the B-Flat Sonata on three occasions. The first version, made in 1963, failed to satisfy him. He recorded it again in 1965 at the "perfect studio" (Rubinstein's own description) of RCA Italiana, just outside Rome. According to Max Wilcox, who produced the pianist's recordings, Rubinstein seemed pleased with this new rendition but wanted to add several of Schubert's short pieces to the projected album. Four years passed before he could do so, by which time he announced that he had rethought the sonata and wished to record it again. This he did in 1969, during a period fraught with personal difficulties. The resulting record met with mixed critical reception, an unusual event in Rubinstein's career. In 1986, Max Wilcox obtained permission from the pianist's widow, Nela Rubinstein, to release the 1965 rendition of the sonata, which he felt was substantially superior. Mrs. Rubinstein agreed, and the remastered performance was issued on the occasion of the pianist's centenary. This is the version included on the present album.

In contrast to this late addition to his repertory, Rubinstein played Schubert's Fantasy in C Major, D. 760, the *Wanderer* Fantasy, from an early age. More than any of Schubert's keyboard solos, this work has the heroic character and virtuoso demands so prized by the Romantic era. Liszt is supposed to have admired it and to have modeled his formidable Sonata in B Minor in part after it. Accordingly, the Fantasy was the one large-scale piano piece by Schubert that remained a staple of the piano

literature throughout the nineteenth century. Rubinstein performed it in public when he was fifteen, at an important charity concert in Warsaw, and continued to do so for the remainder of his career. The recording presented on this disc was made in Italy in April 1965, at the same time Rubinstein registered the B-Flat Major Sonata. Although the pianist was in his late seventies at this time, this performance testifies that he was at the height of his powers. On different occasions, Rubinstein declared that he believed his strengths as an interpreter lay in his ability to convey the poetry inherent in great works of music and in his knack for clarifying the tonal architecture of those works. Here he does both in a rendition that is expressive, intelligent, and pianistically impeccable.

The two Schubert Impromptus that round out this disc were staples of Arthur Rubinstein's repertory from his youth. As it happens, the pianist included the A-Flat Major Impromptu as part of his first commercial recording, made in 1928, and he taped both this work and its famous companion in G-Flat Major on two subsequent occasions. The performances given here date from 1961. Although he performed both pieces frequently in concert, Rubinstein intimated that recordings constitute a better medium for presenting these compositions. In his autobiography, Rubinstein observed that such relatively introverted and small-scale works do not easily make a proper impression in a large auditorium. But, he added, "the same solo pieces have an immediate enthusiastic

impact on the listener when played by the latest perfected records in the intimacy of a room at home."

—Paul Schiavo

Paul Schiavo writes about music for a variety of publications throughout the United States. His articles appear regularly in the program books of Lincoln Center, the Saint Louis Symphony, the Saint Paul Chamber Orchestra, Seattle Opera and other major musical organizations.



THE ARTHUR RUBINSTEIN COLLECTION

brings together all of his approved, commercially released recordings made between 1928 and 1976. They progress in approximate chronological order, with the earliest recordings appearing in volumes 1-9, and the last in volume 81. 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.