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BEETHOVEN PIANO CONCERTO No 4

RUBINSTEIN, ROYAL PHILHARMONIC ORCHESTRA, BEECHAM



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BEETHOVEN PIANO CONCERTO No 4 in G, Op. 58
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Arthur Rubinstein KBE was born on January 28, 1887, the youngest of 8 children of a businessman from the large Jewish community of Łódź, Congress Poland, today's Poland.

He demonstrated an early and singular fascination with the piano beginning two years of age during his elder sister's piano lessons. Rubinstein first studied in Warsaw playing at the age of four for the great Hungarian violinist Joseph Joachim, who was greatly impressed and began to play the role of mentor for the young prodigy. By age ten Rubinstein moved to Berlin to continue his studies. In 1900, he made his debut with the Berlin Philharmonic, followed by appearances in Germany and Poland and further study with Karl Heinrich Barth (an associate of Franz Liszt, Hans von Bulow, Joseph Joachim and Johannes Brahms; Barth also taught Wilhelm Kempff). In 1904, Rubinstein moved to Paris to launch his career in earnest. There he met the composers Maurice Ravel and Paul Dukas and the violinist Jacques Thibaud. He also played Camille Saint-Saëns' *Piano Concerto No. 2* in the presence of the composer. Through the family of Juliusz Wertheim (to whose understanding of Chopin's genius he attributed his own inspiration in the works of that composer) he formed friendships with the violinist Paweł Kochański and composer Karol Szymanowski.

Rubinstein made his New York debut at Carnegie Hall in 1906, and thereafter toured the United States, Austria, Italy, and Russia. According to his own testimony and that of his son in François Reichenbach's film *L'Amour de la vie* (1969), however, he was not well received in the United States, and in 1907, when he found himself destitute and desperate in a Berlin hotel room, hounded by creditors and threatened with being thrown out into the street, he made a failed attempt to hang himself. Subsequently he said that he felt "reborn" and endowed with an unconditional love of life. In 1912, he made his London debut, and found a home there in the Edith Grove, Chelsea musical salon of Paul and Muriel Draper, in company with Kochanski, Stravinsky, Jacques Thibaud, Pablo Casals, Pierre Monteux and others.

Rubinstein stayed in London during World War I, giving recitals and accompanying the violinist Eugène Ysaÿe. In 1916 and 1917, he made his first tours in Spain and South America where he was wildly acclaimed. It was during those tours that he developed a lifelong enthusiasm for the music of Enrique Granados, Isaac Albéniz, Manuel de Falla, and Heitor Villa-Lobos. He was the dedicatee of Villa-Lobos's *Rudepoema* and Stravinsky's *Trois mouvements de Petrouchka*.

Contrary to popular belief that it was the murder of Jews including many members of his own family during World War II which caused Rubinstein to cut all ties with German audiences, it was actually his disgust with Germany's conduct during the first world war, which led Rubinstein never to play there again. His last performance in Germany was in 1914.

In 1921 he made two American tours, travelling to New York with Paweł Kochański (they remained close friends until Kochański's death in 1934) and Karol Szymanowski. The autumn voyage was the occasion of Kochański's permanent migration to the USA.

Rubinstein made numerous live-recording player piano music rolls for the Aeolian Duo-Art system and the American Piano Company (AMPICO), all of which survive today and can be heard. In 1932, he withdrew from concert life for several months to work on his technique and repertoire. Astor Piazzolla cites a Rubinstein concert staged in Buenos Aires in 1939 as one of his first great impressions, which led the 18-year-old to write and dedicate to Rubinstein a piano "concerto", a definition that Rubinstein was to debate with the young composer.

During World War II, the Germans looted his home in Paris, and his career became centered in the United States. Impresario Sol Hurok insisted Rubinstein be billed as Artur for his American concerts, even though the pianist referred to himself as Arthur when in English-speaking countries. He became a naturalized United States citizen in 1946. He expressed his warm feelings for his native country when he played on June 26, 1945, at the San Francisco Opera during the inauguration of the United Nations.

In the mid-1970s, Rubinstein's eyesight began to deteriorate and he retired from the stage at age 89 in May 1976, giving his last concert at London's Wigmore Hall, where he had first played nearly 70 years before. Rubinstein died in Geneva, Switzerland, on December 20, 1982, at the age of 95.

NOTES FROM WIKIPEDIA - FULL NOTES ON THIS RECORDING CAN BE FOUND AT WWW.PRISTINECLASSICAL.COM