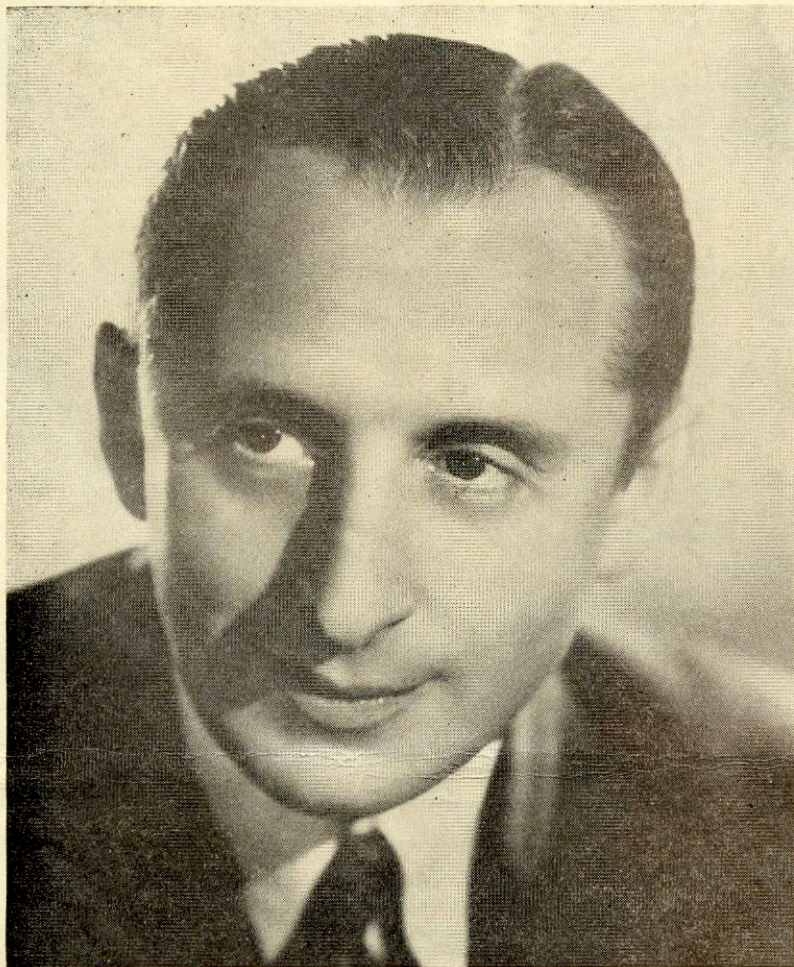


CELEBRITY
CONCERTS
1945-46



The RECORD SHOP

Phil Hart, Mgr.

Presents

Vladimir HOROWITZ

Pianist

IN THE PORTLAND AUDITORIUM

Tuesday, 20 November 1945

AT 8:30 P. M.

MUSIC ROOM
LIBRARY ASSOCIATION



PROGRAM

MUSIC ROOM
LIBRARY ASSOCIATION

- 1 TOCCATA, C major *Bach-Busoni*
Prelude — Adagio — Fugue
- 2 ARABESQUE *Schumann*
- 3 SONATA, No. 7, Op. 83 *Prokofieff*
[Composed in 1942]
Allegro inquieto
Andante caloroso
Precipitato 7-8

- 4 TWO MAZURKAS
C-sharp minor
B minor
- TWO ETUDES
C-sharp minor, Op. 25
F major, Op. 10
- WALTZ, A minor, Op. 34, No. 2
- 5 EXCURSIONS, Op. 20 *Samuel Barber*
Un poco allegro
In slow blues tempo
Allegro molto
- 6 HUNGARIAN RHAPSODY, No. 6 *Liszt*

INTERMISSION

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THIS *Seventh Sonata* of Prokofieff, one of the most recent of a number of compositions in big forms which have emanated from Russia in the midst of her gigantic struggle on the battlefield, bears the date 1939-42. In point of chronology and perceptible evolutions of style it follows immediately upon the heels of the *Sixth Sonata*, opus 82, by the same composer, finished in 1939, which Mr. Horowitz introduced in America three seasons ago. But there are fresh developments in the new work. It is more concentrated than the earlier *Sonata*, being in three movements instead of four. These separate movements are strongly contrasted, yet they bear the impress of an underlying unity and emotional sequence. The expression is not merely formal but subjective, and entirely free of the satirical note which has been a frequent characteristic of Prokofieff's creative past. There is even, in this slow movement, a passage of tone-painting in the "romantic" vein, with the harmonic reverberations so strikingly evocative of the clamor of tolling bells—an effect beloved of many Russian composers, but not conveyed in any instance that the writer recalls with the degree of technical resource and imagination shown by Prokofieff in these pages. And in the *finale*, with its unusual and persistent rhythm, and its joyous accumulation of strength, some might find a tightening of emotional horizons and the presence of a better day.

The opening movement is in grim earnest. Its turbulent and tragical character is presaged by the tempo indication—"Allegro inquieto"—and the swirling unisons and savage march rhythms which constitute the first theme. The second theme—"dolente"—introduced after some quiet chords by a repeated E-flat echoing like a distant trumpet call, is more melodic and elegiac in char-

acter. Is it officiously interpretive to discover in this music the tonal reflex of the profound and terrible realities driven home in an artist's consciousness by the experiences of a merciless war? Prokofieff might readily disclaim any such connection. He has never been a man or an artist to wear his heart on his sleeve. He might instead state, with a measure of justified complacency, that he was only attempting to imbue his music with a high tension and dynamism through the employment of special juxtapositions of rhythms, intervals and keys. Or, again, he might remark upon the modern ear's expanding conception of what is called melody. He could say that his melodic voices traversed tonal territories hitherto forbidden or restricted to the overlordship of sanctioned harmonic command; that, released from such thralldom to traditional bases, he could draw a freer and more intensive melodic line than composers of other days. It is for the listener to decide whether this concept of melody and of harmonic relations is satisfactory and interesting to him. A glance at the printed page establishes beyond argument the composer's mastery of his means and the presence of a style which, while pianistically effective, is the very essence of stark and uncompromising purpose.

The second movement is more subjective, warmly melodic and introspective in character than the tempestuous measures which have preceded. It opens with a nostalgic song which weaves through different voices of the harmony and undergoing various extensions and modulations, swells to a climax almost orchestral in sonorities which employ much of the range of the piano, with the clashing bell effects to which reference has been made. These sounds, as the music subsides, seem to echo from far and near,

and they give place to the return of the melody which opened the movement.

Of the final section of this *Sonata*, which is in the nature of a toccata, it may be said that the progress is in the inverse direction to that ordinarily taken by the composer of the classic form. The concluding section of such a structure is often the most extended if not elaborate portion of the whole. The growth of the work here under discussion is precisely in the opposite order. Each movement, as regards both tonality and thematic material is simpler than the preceding.

There may even be a psychological connotation in this process. The opening movement despite its concision, is of the three the most variegated in its material and can easily be unsettling at first hearing, to the listener's sense of key. This is communicative of its mood of agitation and conflict. In the second movement, considerably simpler in outline, there is a corresponding clarification of basic tonalities. The *finale* is a movement virtually concentrated upon a single idea, a single tonality—that of B-flat—and a single, unflagging, inexorable rhythm. This rhythm is 7-8, with the irregular grouping of beats that the measure demands, and the movement is to all apparent intents and purposes an example of sheer momentum and unemotional design. But in this pure play of rhythm accompanied by a degree of dissonance which gives a sharp additional thrust to its drive, is to be felt an inspiring affirmation of power. It is power. It is power that might turn the wheels and gears of a relentless oncoming tank, or, better, and nearer the context, a rhythm which would be the song of the machines repairing devastations and refashioning the civilization of a liberated world.

By Olin Downes.

