

Concerts Mark Oases In 'Cultural Wasteland'

Horowitz Plays Chopin Pieces Sunday

By HARVEY ELLIOTT
DTH Staff Writer

The first television recital by 64-year-old Russian-born piano virtuoso Vladimir Horowitz will be shown this Sunday night at 9 p.m.

A program of nine selections taped last February before an invited audience at Carnegie Hall, the CBS color special will be carried locally on channel 11.

The broadcast, through tight shots of Horowitz's hands on the keys, reflects the incredible visual as well as aural impact of his playing.

The cameras bring into magnified focus the extraordinary dexterity of fingers flashing through the rapid passages, the physical power and speed of hands, the intensity and daring and passion—all of the spectacular gifts of the born virtuoso.

Ironically, scorn for his own virtuosity was among the factors that drove Horowitz to exile himself from the public for 12 long years, from 1953 to 1965.

"I'll never know," the pianist said when he emerged from his lengthy sabbatical, "how I could ever have allowed myself to land so far from the destination I had set for myself in my youth."

"I would rather have done anything in the world, or nothing at all," he said, "than continue to be a sort of glorified juggler. I never wanted to become 'superman of the piano'."

At 48, after, in his own words, "31 years of constant travel, uncomfortable trains, drafty halls, bad hotels and worse food, of being always exposed to public and critics and of having to be 'superman' all the time," Horowitz retired to take stock of himself and of the future.

There followed a year of silence and self-appraisal, during which he never even touched his piano.

After another year of practicing the standard literature and studying music that he had never seen or

played before, Horowitz began to make records again.

But he was still a decade away from his triumphant return, in the spring of 1965, to the concert stage in what The New York Times called "one of the most dramatic evenings in recent musical history."

With the first commanding

The choice eventually narrowed down to the three that comprise the first half of the program: Ballade in G minor, Opus 23; Nocturne in F minor, Opus 55, No. 1; and Polonaise in F-sharp minor, Opus 44.

Of the four ballades Chopin wrote, the G minor was regarded as "the most spirited

A DTH Preview

notes of the Bach-Busoni Toccata in C, the audience that filled Carnegie Hall on that memorable May afternoon knew that a new Horowitz had arrived.

The old nervous energy was still there, and the unbelievable virtuosity, but there was no display for display's sake. Everything was controlled, artistically disciplined and, because of that discipline, more passionate.

This is the Vladimir Horowitz television viewers will see and hear Sunday night on Channel 11 in a close-up, visually detailed performance that no concert hall could possibly provide.

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When Horowitz agreed to do his first recital on television, there arose the question of just what, of all his vast repertoire, the world-famous piano virtuoso should play on a one-hour broadcast.

"Under no circumstances would I play down to the audience," Horowitz said. "In the many years I have played in the United States, I have learned that audiences here recognize and want to hear the finest music. But there is so much beautiful music!"

The works of Frederic Chopin were inevitably among the first under consideration. Chopin's nocturnes do for a pianist's soul what the etudes do for his fingers and what the waltzes, polonaises and mazurkas do for his sense of rhythm. But which Chopin?

technical and artistic resources of the piano as an instrument to the point where it achieved complete emancipation and artistic self-sufficiency.

Two short selections by Domenico Scarlatti, played without interruption—Sonata in E major and Sonata in G major—follow the Chopin.

"After Chopin, Scarlatti comes as a reposeful contrast," explained Horowitz. "It's easy to underestimate these short Scarlatti sonatas. I have studied the more than 500 which he wrote, and I find them full of variety, imagination and excitement, as well as strength and delicacy."

Robert Schumann is also represented twice on the Horowitz special with the Arabesque, Opus 18, and the familiar, tender "Traumerei."

"Schumann is so transparent—and yet so profound," Horowitz states. "The Arabesque is a reminiscence, a musical water color. 'Traumerei' is a gentle reverie. Schumann has the gift of making every note contribute to a musical meaning."

"Another composer for whom I have always had a special sympathy is Alexander Scriabin, which is why I selected his Etude in D-sharp minor, Opus 8, No. 12," Horowitz said.

"This etude is more familiar than most of his pieces, but it combines freshness of feeling with great dramatic intensity."

Horowitz concludes his

television hour with his own variations on a Gypsy Song from Bizet's "Carmen." His transcription of this originally

fiery piece of music is possibly the most phenomenal pyrotechnical exhibition in the entire annals of piano playing,

according to some critics. The time and location for this first-time-on-television recital: Sunday night at 9 p.m.

on channel 11. It's Vladimir Horowitz: A Television Concert at Carnegie Hall. And it's sheer greatness!

WUNC Airs Beethoven Sonatas

A full year of work has gone into University Television's (Channel 4) new series "Beethoven: The Sonatas." It will premiere on October 7, bringing to viewers for the first time on any television station all 32 of Beethoven's piano sonatas.

Made possible through the joint efforts of University Television and the UNC Department of Music, the series will feature six North Carolina pianists—William S. Newman, Clifton Matthews, Betty Bullock Talbot, Wilton Mason, Barbara Rowan, and Michael Zenge. The series is produced and directed by Bill Hannah.

"Beethoven: The Sonatas" can be seen on Monday evenings at 8:30 beginning October 7. Each program will be repeated the following Sunday at 5:30 in the afternoon. The series will

continue for 24 weeks and will include performances of all of the Beethoven sonatas, with commentary upon their significance.

The twenty-four week series will present the sonatas in the order in which they were written, thereby giving the viewer an idea of Beethoven's artistic growth in the sonata form.

Michael Zenge will act as host for the series, supplementing the performance of each sonata with commentary upon its significance in Beethoven's development. He will also appear as pianist on several of the programs. Zenge is an instructor in piano in the Department of Music.

Other performers include Betty Bullock Talbot, who has been known to North Carolina audiences since she was thirteen and played with the

North Carolina Symphony. She is a graduate of Oberlin Conservatory, and has studied and performed in Germany and Switzerland.

A native of California, Barbara Rowan has made her home in Chapel Hill since joining the staff of the Department of Music four years ago. She teaches piano and theory, and is called upon frequently to serve as a judge for various piano contests throughout the state.

William S. Newman, an Alumni Distinguished Professor of Music at Chapel Hill, is an authority on the sonata form. He has recently published a three volume work, "A History of the Sonata Idea." He is Chairman of Instruction in Piano and Director of Graduate

Music Studies at the University of North Carolina. Clifton Matthews is an instructor in piano and music appreciation at the University. Originally from Kansas, he studied at Julliard School of Music in New York and won a Fulbright grant to study with Friedrich Wuhler in Munich.

Wilton Mason has been a frequent guest on University Television, both as performer and as commentator. He is the Chairman of the Department of Music.



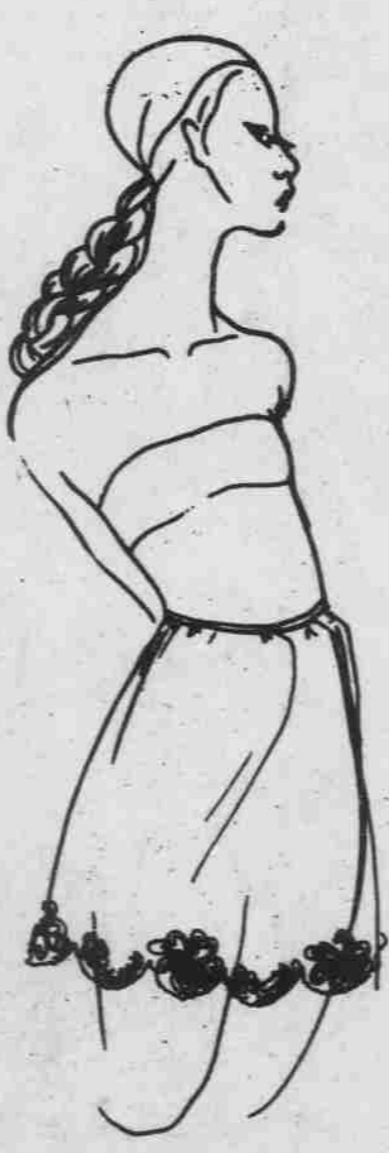
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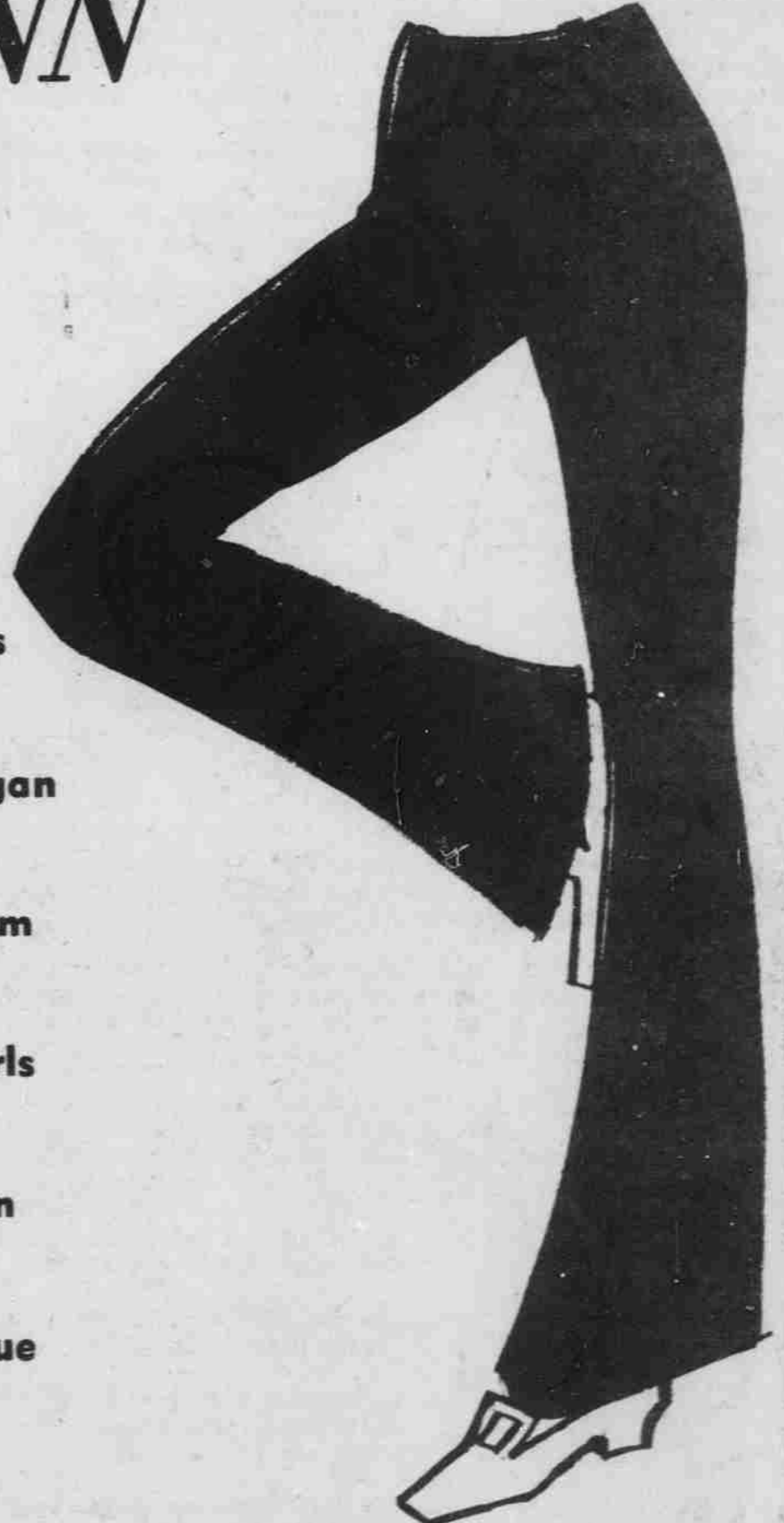
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