

1732

Piano Recital
by

Peter Katon

10.5.78

MANOEL
THEATRE

PELLEGRINI

405

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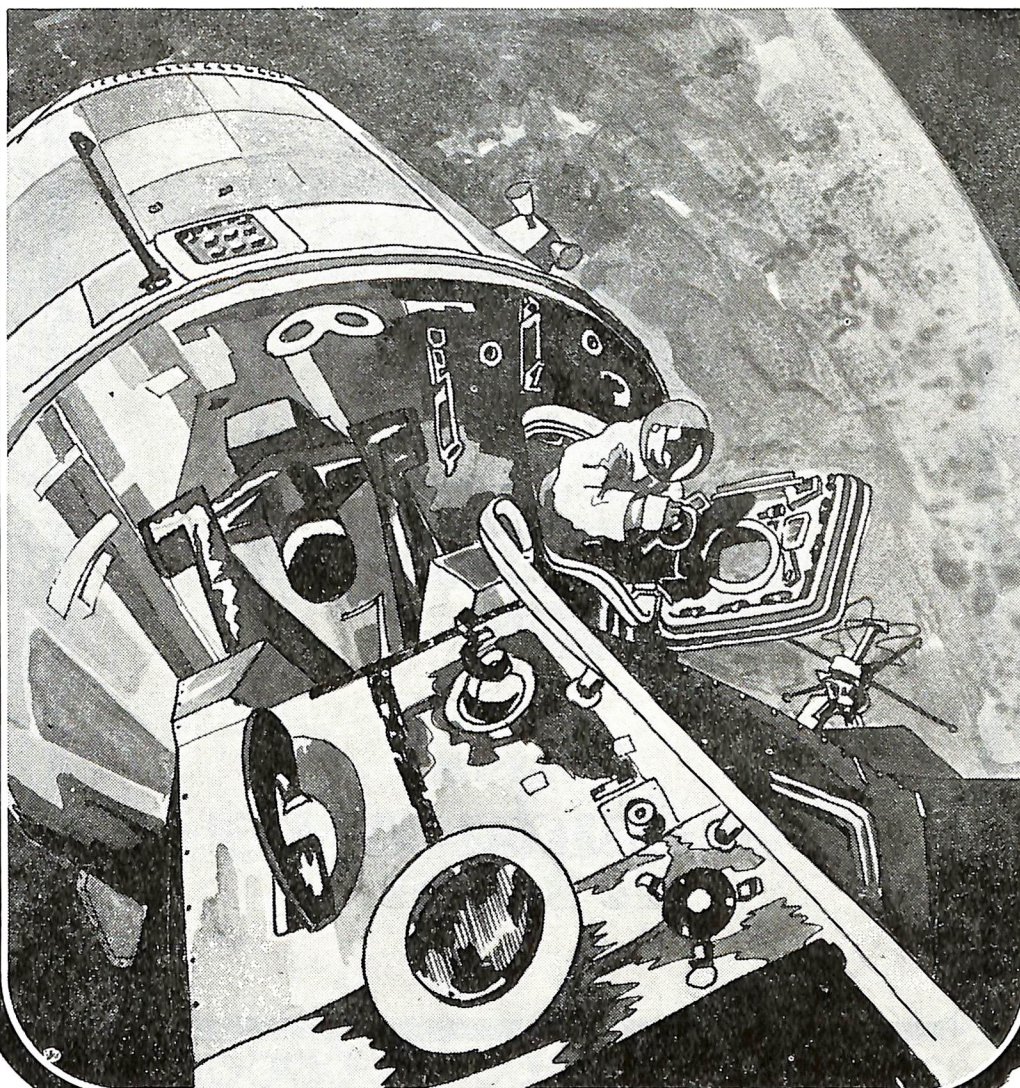
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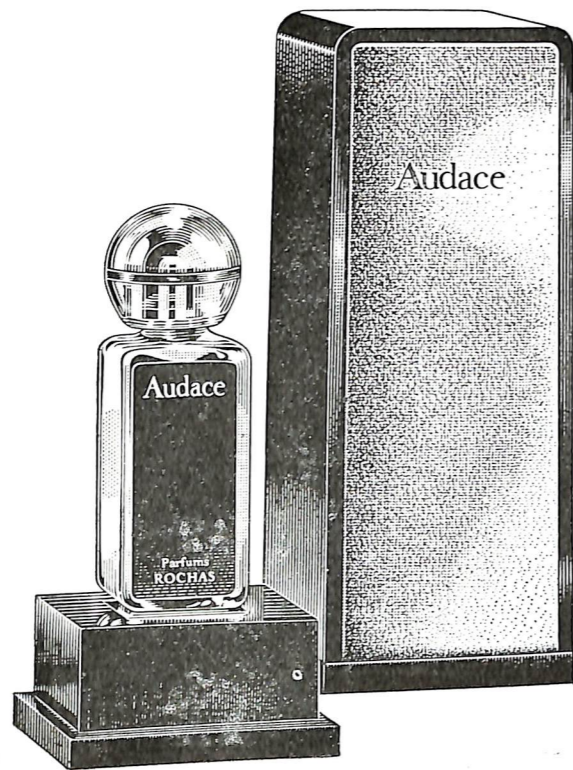
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PETER KATIN

in

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AT THE MANOEL THEATRE

on Wednesday, 10th May 1978

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Peter Katin's schedule this season has been as full as ever, and as well as giving numerous concerts in the U.K. he has also appeared in Finland, Poland and Czechoslovakia, early in 1978 he undertook a marathon tour of South Africa, and on the occasion of his New York recital in December 1977 he was presented with the Chopin Arts Award, the previous recipient being Arthur Rubinstein.

Meanwhile he continues to play to packed houses and is now firmly established as one of the leading interpreters of Chopin, about whom he is writing a book. His repertoire in general tends to centre round the romantic and impressionist schools, although his Mozart and Schubert playing has been as highly acclaimed as, for instance, his recording of the complete Rachmaninov Preludes. Some of his early successes in London included concertos as diverse as Beethoven's G major and the Rachmaninov No. 3, and after an overwhelming performance of the latter he was in danger of being typecast as a virtuoso. However, his musical interests are varied enough for him to have avoided a possible rut, and he has had the opportunity of developing his talents into the fields of chamber music and Lieder while retaining his unique blend of fingers, heart and intellect, there are few players who can bring such panache to a work such as the Rachmaninov-Paganini Rhapsody while sustaining an uncompromisingly slow tempo in the second movement of Schubert's great B flat Sonata.

Peter Katin's outside activities are very varied. He is an ardent (but, he claims, inexpert) fisherman, he has made a considerable study of photography and he has no small knowledge of recording techniques. He is a record collector, finding a fascination in the way performances and recording methods have changed even in one generation, he reads avidly and has written programme notes for just about everything in his repertoire. As a teacher he has coached many of today's young pianists and takes a keen interest in artists in general who are at the outset of their career, and although concert commitments have severely curtailed his teaching activities he manages to give master classes at his studio when he can, such occasions being regarded as events not to be missed.

PROGRAMME

POLONAISE IN F SHARP MINOR OP. 44

With the Polonaise F sharp minor we arrive at the type of fantasia based on the polonaise which Chopin evolved as he felt the need to put into the normal polonaise framework more than it could comfortably hold. He did not use the title "Polonaise — Fantasie" until he was forced to do so by the altogether unusual form of Op. 61; but the idea was already in his mind in 1840. The F sharp minor work, besides containing a polonaise proper, of tremendous sweep and energy, is remarkable for the presence of a mazurka that serves as the trio. The transition from this warlike picture to the idyllic mazurka is realized with great art, and even more so, the return to the main polonaise. The introduction and coda are entirely in keeping with the character of a fantasia. The former rises like a whirlwind from a tiny motive; the coda carries the violence of the music to a climax and then allows it to fall away until only a distant murmur is left.

IMPROMPTU IN F SHARP OP. 36

This impromptu has a striking contrast between its parts — a pompous march in D major follows the pastoral notes of the first section. Various opinions are held concerning the unusual modulation by which Chopin turns into F major after the march. One cannot deny that when the passage is played as Chopin indicated, i.e. diminuendo — rallentando — piano, down to pianissimo for the murmuring entry of F major, the effect is completely artistic. The last pages of the work are an example of Chopin's exquisite 'jeu perle'.

SONATA IN B MINOR OP. 58

Allegro maestoso — Scherzo — Largo — Presto non tanto.

The B minor Sonata Op. 58, was written in 1844 after Chopin received the sad news of his father's death. This was to be his last major work. As in its more famous predecessor, the imperatives of classical sonata form are not observed. The shape of both is so similar that we "may take it, therefore", as Arthur Hedley has observed, "that he intended to write the sonata in the way that he realized best suited him" which is to concede that Chopin had every right to ignore "the letter of the law governing the mythical true sonata form" "so dear to academicians". The same authority affirms that the B minor is among "the finest music ever written for the piano". And indeed, it rises far above the profoundly troubled circumstances of its birth to stand alone, even after a century, as the noblest swan song in the keyboard literature.

INTERVAL

BARCAROLLE IN F SHARP OP. 60

This is one of the great works from Chopin's final years and is surely his most "Italian" piece, with the rocking gondola rhythm and long expansive melodic evocative of the human voice. The main themes are developed with a masterly sense of style and architecture culminating in a triumphant statement of the principal melody followed by a nostalgic coda.

FANTASY IN F MINOR OP. 49

This Fantasy was almost exclusively composed by Chopin for the piano. Under his hands as virtuoso and composer alike, rose the most flowering and magic passages, glittering and mysterious arabesques.

His Melancholic melodies leave deep and unforgettable impressions on the listener.

Rhythmic and passionate harmonies and the finest ornaments of tunes fascinate all our senses.

What Paganini could achieve only by his demonic play, Chopin mastered as composer.

NOCTURNE IN D FLAT OP. 27 NO. 2

With Op. 27 we arrive at two perfect specimens of the 'genre', sufficient in themselves to establish Chopin's title in this domain. In the first, in C sharp minor, the uneasy, hesitant melody, floating over an accompaniment of extraordinary depth, evokes a unique picture of night and mystery. Into this obscurity Chopin introduces a dramatic episode and builds it up skillfully to an irresistible climax. The nocturne is rounded off by a coda of ideally poetic effect. The second Nocturne is in complete contrast: no brooding air of mystery in this music. It is serenely lyrical, not without a touch of sentimentality — the temptation of thirds and sixths is hard to resist — but not languishing. The coda provides a further example of Chopin's gift for producing new-sounding effects with essentially simple means. In this case, straightforward chromatic movement over the fundamental D flat is turned into something 'rich and strange' by the way in which the parts are laid out on the keyboard.

POLONAISE IN A FLAT OP. 53

In the polonaise Chopin found a grateful medium through which he expressed his intense, passionate Polish nationalism. The grand lines and striding phrase lengths of the polonaises, contain bardic evocations of the past-battles heroically lost and the deathless glory. In this polonaise, written in 1824 and called "Heroic", we hear the trumpet calls and "see" visions of the advancing hosts.

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EVENTS

MINISTRY OF CULTURE — BALLET AND FOLK DANCING
FROM RUSSIA, IRAQ, POLAND — Monday, 15th May at
7.30 p.m.

MINISTRY OF CULTURE — CONCERT BY THE ORCHES-
TRA SINFONICA SICILIANA AND FOLKLORE GROUP OF
SCIACCA TERME — Tuesday, 16th May at 7.30 p.m.

PRINCESS NATHALIE POUTIATINE — BALLET PERFORM-
ANCES — Saturday, 20th at 7.30 p.m. and Sunday, 21st May at
6.30 p.m.

TEENS AND TWENTIES TALENT TRUST — MADAME X —
Friday, 26th; Saturday, 27th at 7.00 p.m.; Sunday 28th at 6.30 p.m.

MANOEL THEATRE MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

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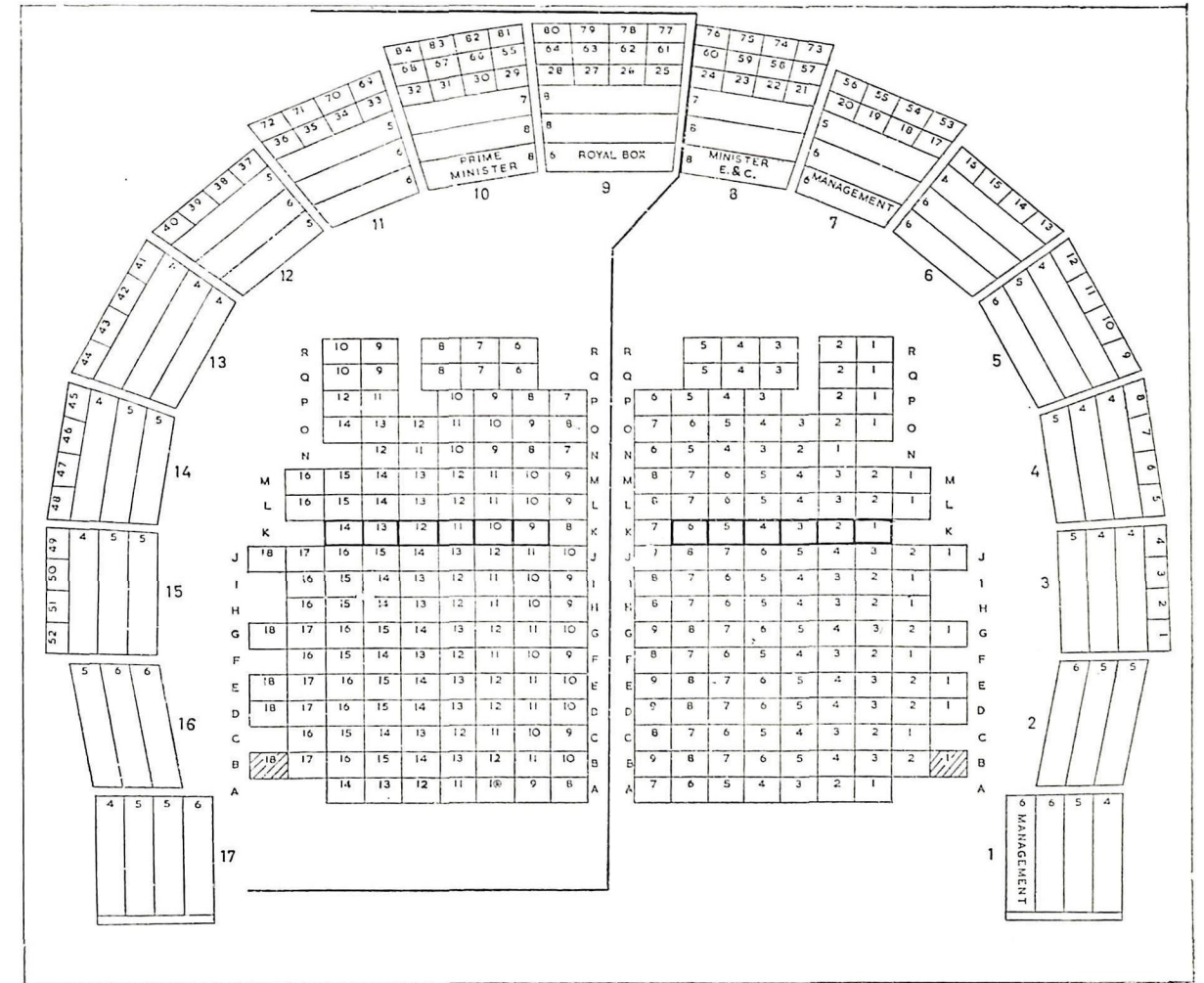
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MANOEL THEATRE BOOKING PLAN

Late comers will not be admitted to the Auditorium.

Smoking is not permitted in the Auditorium, in the Boxes and in the Gallery.

The Management reserve the right to vary or omit any part of the programme without previous notice.

Patrons are reminded that the taking of photographs during the performance is not allowed.

Children even when accompanied by their parents, will be required to occupy a seat.

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