

WASHINGTON DATELINE

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Artur Rubinstein Honored

In an impressive and moving ceremony in the East Room of the White House, President Ford presented the Medal of Freedom to Artur Rubinstein. With Mrs. Rubinstein and Mrs. Ford standing by as well as a distinguished guest list from all walks of life - President Ford noted that the Medal of Freedom is the highest civilian honor that is within his power to bestow.

"I feel privileged on this occasion to act on behalf of all Americans in presenting this medal to one of the giants of our time," Ford said. "The legend of Artur Rubinstein has been built upon many, many pillars. Critics have acclaimed him the greatest master of the piano living today, a musician as thoroughly familiar with Chopin and Beethoven as with the interpretations of more modern Spanish and Impressionist pieces."

Mr. Ford added that it's difficult for many of us to believe that Rubinstein made his New York debut in Carnegie Hall some 70 years ago. "He was a young man and by his own account, he wasn't the artist that he knew he could be, but in the years that have passed, then, through his extraordinary dedication and through the support of his wife and family, he has turned his vision and his interpretations into an uncompromising standard of musical excellence." Ford continued, "Yet, to millions of fans across the globe, Artur Rubinstein has given something more than the joy of music -- he has also given the joy of life itself."

Mr. Ford added that Americans feel a very special bond with Artur Rubinstein, because, some 30 years ago, he chose America as his home. "He has been decorated and celebrated in almost every land, but it is said that above all else he values the document that made him an American," the President said. "I feel proud that on this 200th Anniversary of our

Nation, I have the privilege to present this medal to one of our greatest national treasures."

The citation reads: "To Artur Rubinstein: Musician and gentleman, bon vivant, Artur Rubinstein has shared his singular and deeply personal mastery of the piano throughout the world. For over seven decades, his ceaseless vitality, his luminous spirit and his profound depth of mind have brought a fresh sparkle to the lives of people everywhere. His audiences love him, his colleagues and friends revere him and his country -- the United States of America -- is proud to proclaim him as a giant among artists and men."

After much applause and a standing ovation, Rubinstein responded: "I blush morally, because my old age (he is 89 years old) does not bring the blood to my face, for all the things you said. I was touched very deeply. I never had anything like it and I feel very proud of those words. In my own mind, it is not deserved, but it is good to feel that the President of the United States thinks in that way about me..."

Artur Rubinstein went on to captivate his audience by recounting that his love affair with the U.S. is a long one. He had arrived when this country was not quite "musically ripe." And he was far from being "ready for my profession."

He added that the U.S. "has saved the life of my family and of my own because somehow by providential miracle my success started right before the second World War came on."

Artur Rubinstein pointed out that he had lived -- peacefully -- in Paris and that he would have stayed there. But in 1938 Sol Hurok coaxed him in to returning to the United States. "He was right and it was the right time," said Mr. Rubinstein. "I had instantaneous success this time and a re-engagement for the next time which meant in 1939. I have never left the U.S.A. since. This country began to spoil me, to love me, to give me such long, long, long years of affection, of friendship. Really, I can't express it in words."

A collection of portraits of famous "Women in France" will be displayed in the Student Union Building at UNLV through May 20.

BRICKS FOR GUATEMALA

As you well know, Guatemala suffered one of the worst natural disasters of this century when it was struck by an earthquake on February 4, 1976. A poor country to start with, Guatemala experienced tremendous material and economic losses, but more important yet, 23,000 people lost their lives, hundreds of thousands were wounded, and nearly one - and - a - half million people, out of a population of five million, were left homeless. The situation is desperate now, but will become much worse in May when the six - month - long tropical rainy season sets in.

The Jewish people of Guatemala want to help the country where they have always lived in peace and where they have been allowed to prosper. Guatemala has traditionally been a friend of Israel, and as a member of the U.N., was instrumental in the creation of the State of Israel. It was also the second country, after the U.S., to formally recognize Israel upon its independence.

A project has been launched by the Jewish Community of Guatemala, whereby all the Jewish people of the world can participate in rebuilding one of the most affected cities, Sanarate. The government of Guatemala has enthusiastically accepted the project and has formally assigned the reconstruction of the homes of Sanarate to the Jewish people.

The Jewish Community of Guatemala is already collecting funds from among its two hundred member families, but the total sum required is out of reach for such a small community. Nevertheless, our community is already working on the project, machines and materials are being acquired, technical and organizational aspects are well advanced, bricks are being produced at Sanarate, and shortly the first houses will be going up. It should be noted that this is a self - help project, in which the people of Sanarate are taking an active part as they will receive homes only in exchange for work.

This is a worldwide appeal to all our fellow Jews and Jewish Congregations. Let us rebuild Sanarate together in the name of all the Jewish people and thus help Guatemala in its reconstruction.

Bricks for Guatemala, P.O. Box 1332, Guatemala, C.A.

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