

Thursday, January 20, 1964
LEND ME YOUR EARS:

Brahms Cycle Opens At Palazzo Ruspoli

ROME'S NEWEST CHAMBER MUSIC series, sponsored by the International Center of Musical Studies, got off to a resounding start Tuesday night with an excellent concert of Brahms played by pianist Hans Richter-Haaser in the elegantly-frescoed Palazzo Ru-

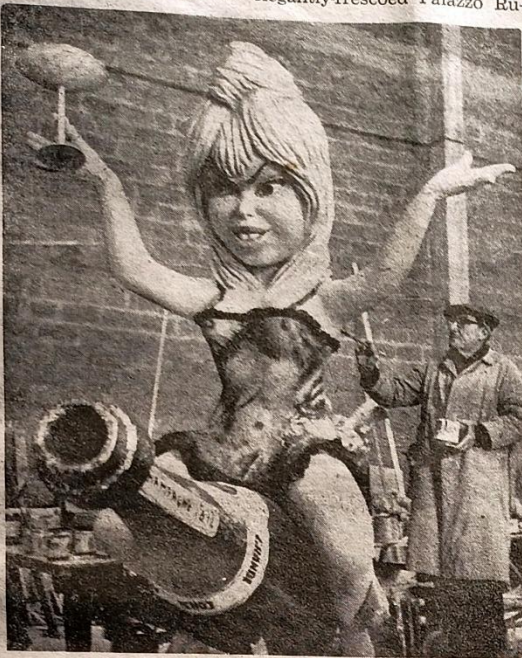


RICHTER-HAASER

spoli. Playing the first of a cycle of eight concerts dedicated to Brahms, Richter-Haaser demonstrated his indisputable stature as a pianist of the first order, though he only started his international career in 1954. Hampered somewhat by the bad acoustics of the hall in the Casa dell'America Latina, and a tendency of his piano to blur with the hold pedal, the silver-haired pianist delivered a fine performance of the B-flat minor Scherzo that served as a warmup for the evening's masterwork, the well-known Schumann in F minor, Opus No. 5. Richter-Haaser's sensitive but firm touch plucked the moody and somber tones of the first two movements that are broken off sharply by the crisp and almost lilting scherzo. Richter-Haaser, perhaps best when playing the more bombastic passages, was a bit too lethargic and slow on the intermezzo and much of the moodiness of what is only a brief interlude was lost. But he made up for it with sensitive and brisk playing in the finale that brought prolonged applause from the packed hall. Again acoustics and piano served to make the Rhapsody in G minor Opus 79 No. 2, a bit muddled. His tendency to the "fortissimo" was too accentuated in the final movement. But he finished the evening with an old standby, the Variations and Fugue on a Theme by Handel, Opus 24, in which his utter control of intricate runs and rolling lyrical passages of the fugue were a delight to hear. Next Tuesday the Roman Chamber Concerts will feature mezzo soprano Anna Reynolds singing Brahms lieder, at 9:15 p.m.

Via Venetopics

Hottest rumor on the "Beach" these days is that famed Italian film director Michelangelo Antonioni and actress Monica Vitti were wed secretly in Ravenna last Thursday during a pause of shooting on "The Red Desert." However, friends say this is not true but that they are planning to marry in February. Antonioni recently obtained an annulment of an earlier marriage from the Sacra Rota after eight years of waiting. Antonioni and Miss Vitti have been close friends for years and she has starred in most of his well-known films. Actress Matilde Calnan leaving for Geneva to play the character lead in the film "A Quiet Business," directed by Mel Welles... the St. Cecilia Academy chamber music series in the Sala on Via dei Greci has been temporarily suspended because of outside difficulties... the Catherine Spaak-Bette Davis film, "The Empty Canvas," which was made here by Damiano Damiani, will premiere in New York in February... British author Somerset Maugham will be 80 this Saturday and in homage to one of the grand old men of English



CARNIVAL IS COMING — Carnival in Italy means the colorful parade of giant floats in Viareggio and the craftsmen of the city are hard at work on the floats now. Above, one of the float builders puts the final touches on a gigantic Brigitte Bardot riding a champagne bottle. The parade this year will be Sunday, Feb. 9. Mardi Gras is Feb. 11 (AP photo)

letters the British Council in Rome will hold a lecture on his work Friday at 6 p.m. Speaker will be John Graham, deputy representative of the British Council in Italy... Father Mario Borelli, founder of the Casa dello Scugnizzo in Naples and generally considered the "Father of Italian Cinema," will be honored by a reception on Saturday at the Collegio San Clemente in Rome... we hear that many scenes of American producer Martin Manulis' new film, "Cassandra at the Wedding," will be shot in Rome this spring. Serge Bourguignon will direct, Natalie Wood will star.

Here And There

Italian conductor Carlo Maria Giulini and an ensemble of leading Italian singers are winning ovations with Mozart's "Don Giovanni" in Israel. Giulini is conducting the Israel Philharmonic Orchestra on the 14-performance tour which is under the auspices of Italian Ambassador Count Giovanni Revedin. Singing are Laura Lodi, Renée Coenme, Pilar Lorenga, Paolo Monteroso, Renato Capecchi, Walter Mo-

nachesi, Agostino Ferrin and Pietro Bottazzo. Giulini has conducted other operas in Israel including "Falstaff" in 1959 and "The Marriage of Figaro" in 1960... actress Sophia Loren is back in Rome from Switzerland but is due to return shortly to Burgenstock... one-man show by Giulio Turcato opens at the Segno Gallery, Via Capo le Case, tomorrow... the Milan section of the Foreign Press Club has elected a new board of directors. Giuliano Gerbi of the Elite Publishing Corp. in New York has been named managing director, Fulvio Castellano of Italian American Business is the general secretary and Theodore C. Francis of World Wide Information Service Inc. is treasurer... French actor Jean-Claude Brialy due in Italy towards the end of the month on a holiday... German-born actress Elke Sommer has been signed for the only feminine star role in what is described as the most expensive British film to be made this year. The 23-year-old lovely will collect \$140,000 for her part in the \$6 million "The Unknown Battle" which will also star Stephen Boyd... American filmmaker Richard Leacock's "Toys" and "Pete and Johnny" will be screened today at the Festival of the People documentary exhibition in Florence as well as British director John Irvin's "Gala Day"... George O'Neill, vice president of Pepsi Cola, is in Rome and staying at the Excelsior with Mrs. O'Neill.



FUR FLYING — Italian actress Vanna Lisi in fur coat and Garbo glasses off to the U.S. via TWA to star with Jack Lemmon in the new movie, "How To Murder My Wife." Miss Lisi will play the role originally intended for Marilyn Monroe (AP photo)

Callas Triumphs In 'Tosca'

LONDON, Jan. 22 (AP) — Maria Callas made a triumphant return to the operatic stage last night, singing the title role in Puccini's "Tosca" through a London fog which seeped into the Royal Opera House in Covent Garden.

An audience of 2,000 stood and cheered the 40-year-old soprano for 35 minutes after the final curtain.

It was the New York-born singer's first stage appearance since she sang in Cherubini's "Medea" at La Scala in June 1962. Singing with Callas were Tito Gobbi as Scarpia and Renato Cioni as Cavaradossi.

Said the Times: "Disregarding, in so far as was possible, the noisy, vulgar, artificial, vacuous philistinism of a hyper-typical Callas first night audience, the devotee of opera had to admit that last night's premiere of Franco Zeffirelli's new production of Puccini's "Tosca," the first radical restudy at the Royal Opera House since the opera was first produced here in 1900, was marvelously exciting and convincing down to the most meticulous detail.

Madame Callas was in more effective voice than for several years; the ugly patches were under skillful control; the top notes rang in character, even if not true — and the musicianship, the dramatic realism, the affecting power of the performance were more strongly to be felt than ever because the interpretation as a whole is more closely and profoundly integrated."

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