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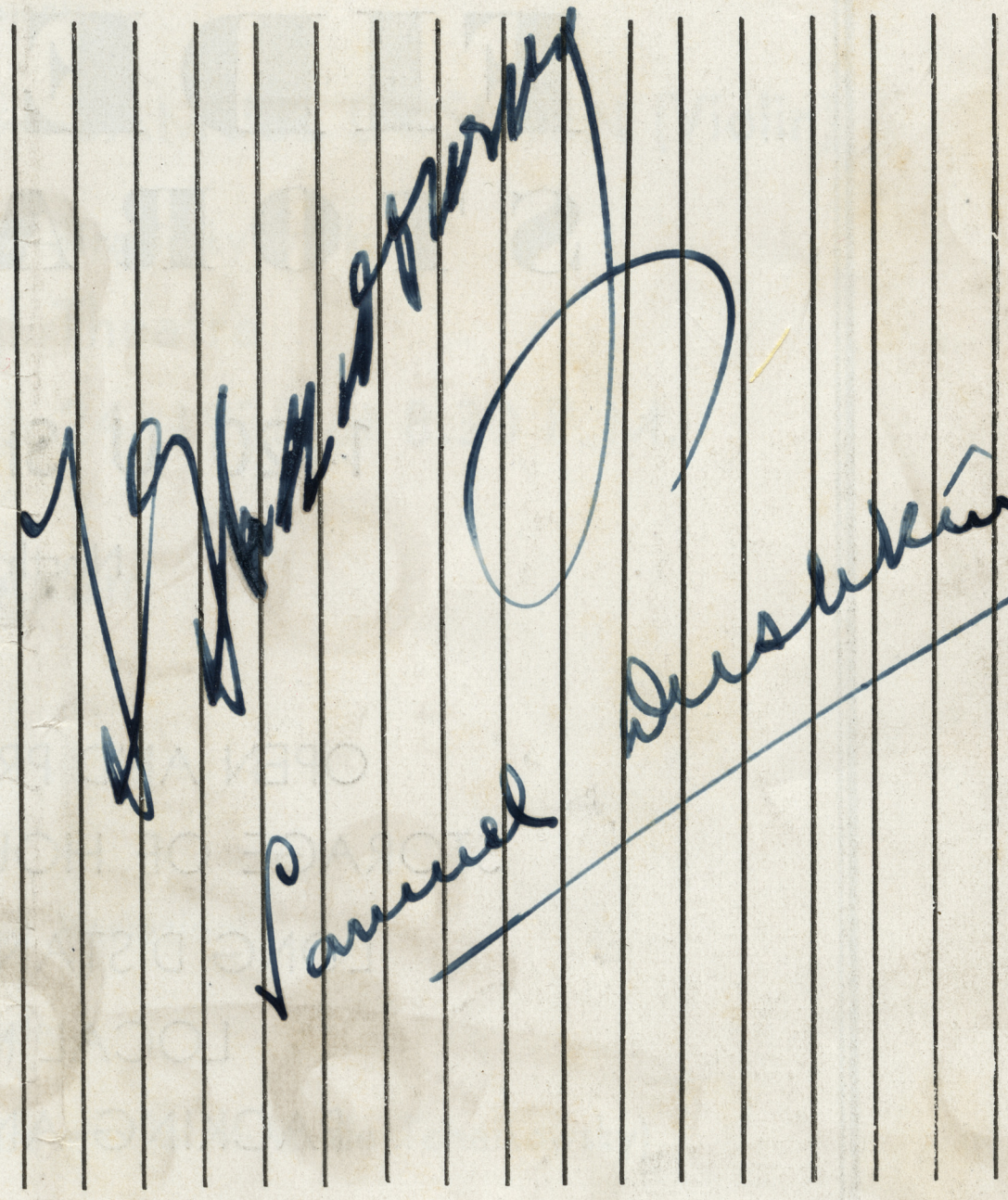
SUNDAY

CONCERT



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T. Arthur Smith Concert Bureau

Presents

IGOR STRAVINSKY (Piano)—SAMUEL DUSHKIN (Violin)

In a program of Stravinsky works

National Theatre

Sunday Evening, March 24, 1935 at 8.30 P.M.

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- MARCHE CHINOISE
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- SCHERZO
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PROGRAM NOTES ON IGOR STRAVINSKY

Igor Stravinsky, the world-famous composer, was born near St. Petersburg on June 5, 1882. He was the son of an operatic singer who took care to develop his son's precocious and astonishing musical gifts. There was no question, however, of making a professional musician of him and he was induced to prepare himself for a legal career. But Stravinsky did not neglect music and by the time he was twenty-two years of age, his talent had so far matured that Rimsky-Korsakov, whom he met at this time, strongly advised him to drop the law and devote himself entirely to musical studies. It was under Rimsky-Korsakov, accordingly, that he received his first systematic training.

Stravinsky's first work of importance was a symphony begun in 1905 and finished in 1907. A song-cycle with orchestra, "Faun and Shepherdress" followed soon afterwards and was in turn succeeded by two orchestral pieces "Fireworks" and "Scherzo Fantastique." At a performance of the latter, Serge Diaghilev, whose "Russian Ballet" came into vogue at that time, was so struck by the young composer's uncommon gifts that he invited him to write the music for one of his forthcoming productions. This was "The Firebird," a brilliant score, which reveals more than the germs of a remarkable individuality. It appeared in 1910, and only a year later followed a new ballet, "Petroushka," which completely unfolded the composer's striking personality. As regards brilliancy and originality of scoring and aptness of characterization, this work still remains Stravinsky's undisputed masterpiece.

In 1913 appeared his third ballet "Le Sacre du Printemps" which created a sensation at its production in Paris by its deliberate primitiveness and uncouthness of rhythm and orchestral color. Next came an opera "The Nightingale" based on a tale by Hans Anderson. This, since has been staged as a ballet with a scenairo basd on the original libretto. Among Stravinsky's many later works are the well known and loved Pulcinella; Mavra, the comic opera in one act; the Japanese Lyrics; L'Histoire due Soldat and Renard.

The dominating principle that governs the art of Stravinsky from "Petroushka" onward, is his belief that music should make a purely physical appeal to the hearer and should be free from any literary and pictorial associations which address themselves to the intellect. Everything that Stravinsky writes is admirably suited to the medium for which it is intended. His art obeys no rules, but those of its own making and these are subject to no definite system. His music is far from shapeless, but questions of form are invariably determined by the nature of the work itself and not by any rigid patterns deliberately chosen before hand. Nor is Stravinsky's harmony subject to any laws of progression or combination. He shuns no dissonance and avoids no orthodox chord if it happens to serve his purpose. No mode of expression is considered illegitimate by him, so long as a desired effect can be gained by it, but it must always remain a means to an end, for Stravinsky never sets out to startle his hearers at any price, as he has been unjustly accused of doing. There can be no doubt that a composer who provokes such bitter controversy must be a personality of exceptional strength, whose firm belief in his principles, be they right or wrong, is indisputable. Adverse criticism has indeed, seldom denied his genius; arguments about his art are always begun with a full realization of his exceptional gifts.

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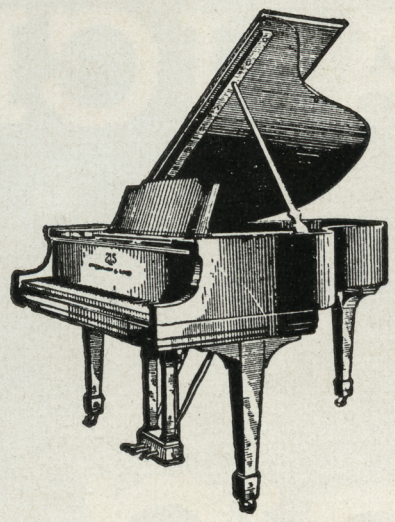

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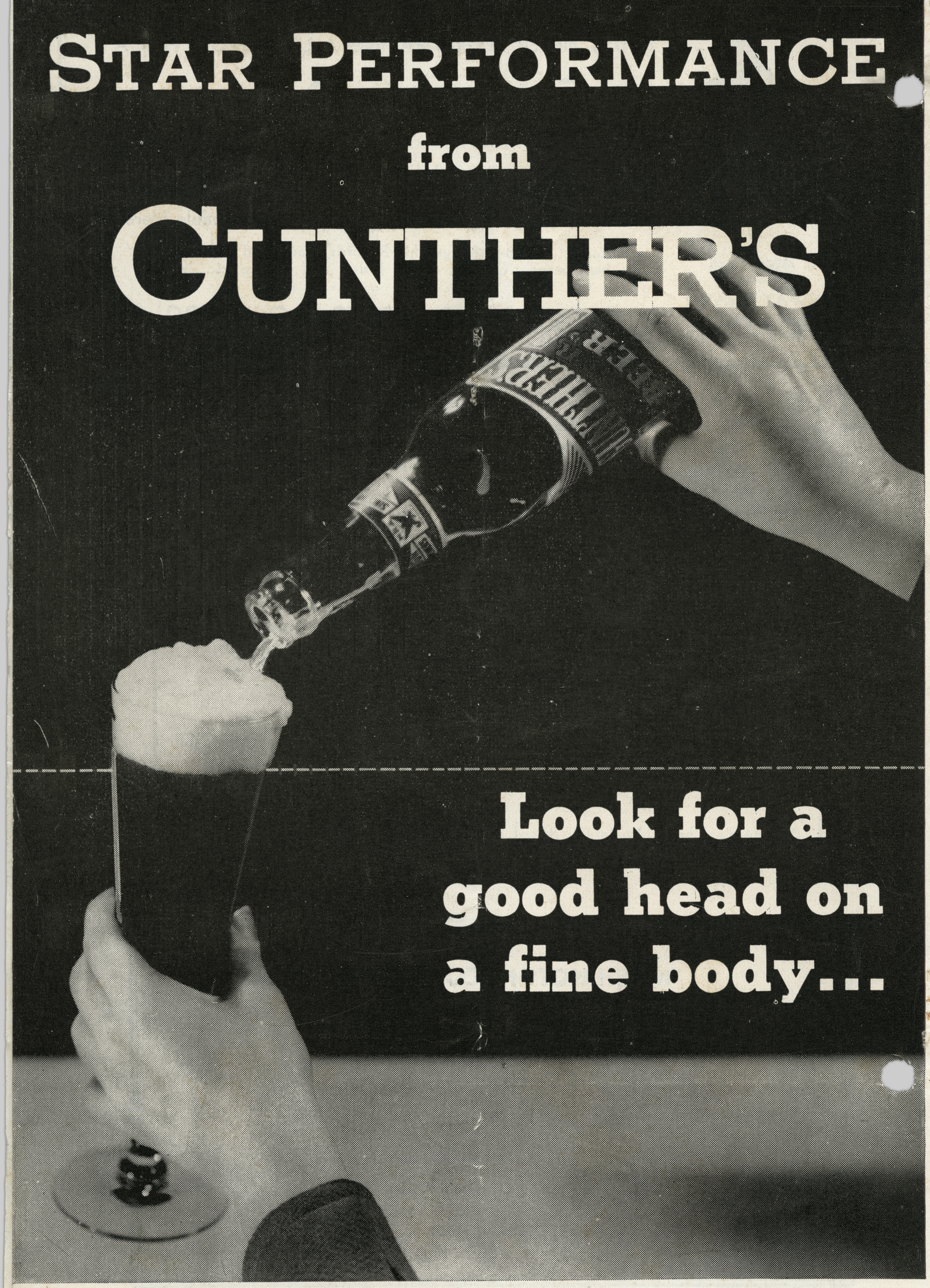

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