

9-15-1991

## Henri Temianka Correspondence; (fuerstner)

Carl Fuerstner

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## Henri Temianka Correspondence; (fuerstner)

### **Description**

This collection contains material pertaining to the life, career, and activities of Henri Temianka, violin virtuoso, conductor, music teacher, and author. Materials include correspondence, concert programs and flyers, music scores, photographs, and books.

### **Keywords**

Henri Temianka, Carl Fuerstner, September 15, 1991, virtuosity in musical performance, culture, violinist, violin, chamber music, camaraderie, Maurice Abravanel, humour, reading, daughter, father, family, wife, husband, Christmas, holiday, mother, son, religion, Germans, Russians, racial slur, music rehearsal, instruments, music education, recreation and entertainment, discontent, Armenians, János Starker



Carl Fuerstner  
2518 East Seventh St.  
Bloomington, Indiana 47401

September 15, 1991

Dear Henri,

I'd be curious to see the look of astonishment on your face when you'll receive this letter from me! I am certain, however, that you haven't thought of me half as much in the past 30 or more years as I have of you! The fact is that every single time I pass my book case with your wonderful book in it (and there must be hundreds of them) I make a big resolution to finally go to it and write to you the next day - and then I do not do it again and again - although there are quite a number of outward events that should give me an immediate reason to take up the pen - there are so many things in my memory - little bon mots and anecdotes which I regularly relate to my friends who inquire about my past and want to write my life story or even a biography - and then one of these leads to the other, and pretty soon an entire period of my past emerges into my consciousness, and with it events and people that I had almost forgotten - many of all this is connected with you and your extraordinary personality, your wit and sense of humor as well as remarks during rehearsals and while driving in cars or flying in planes or riding in trains (in these medieval times when we still used these old-fashioned conveyances) - in short, you have no idea how very much I re-member of you and about you, going back all the way to 1939 and then up into the 50s!!



However, when I start remembering you now and  
telling stories and remarks and incidents - one  
keeps coming up most frequently - and that is  
not really about you - it is my prime funny  
story which I tell in every gathering or in any  
party; something which constantly evokes enormous  
hilarity, in fact it is my top story in front  
of people - - a story which has to be antici-  
pated by another one, not in connection with  
you. remember Harold Wolf the one-time  
conductor of the Utah Symphony, still under  
Abramson's little teenage daughter asked her  
mother who was Turkish why they couldn't have  
a Christian Christmas with tree and the whole  
dingbuns, like all the other children. The  
mother answered and said: you see we can't do  
that - your father is a Jew and I am your  
mother from Turkey - the girl, growing up  
among Mormon children, said: but Mother, can't  
we be Jack Jews? - This precious remark,  
possible only among Mormon people, is then  
topped by the priceless utterance of your son  
Janny who was observed playing in the yard in  
Provo by Emmy with the other question: Are  
you a Mormon? whereupon your son came  
forth with "no, my father is a Jew and my  
mother is a reptile" - - I hope you haven't  
forgotten this story - it still brings tears of  
laughter to my eyes - and usually brings the  
present company to yelling and screaming -  
- - so you see I'm stealing your stories  
in my parties - this last one never fails -  
but there are many other things - also, I see  
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things - I see you sitting in my shabby little apart-  
ment in San Francisco together with the mosess and  
other mostly medical friends - - the day  
was June 22, 1941, the day the Germans invaded  
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almost came true! You mentioned this was possible because of the miserable organization of the Russians. I remember this remark because you said it in German -- and the many funny remarks and stories, some of them in your fabulous book, and also I remember tense moments during rehearsals with the Paganini Quartet sometimes between you and Foidart and even concerning me but it all came out so peaceful and happy -- my God, I wouldn't miss a day of those wonderful years with the Quartet -- another thing came to my mind -- in the beginning of the war when you and I went on our concert tour -- I think it was 1942 -- we stood waiting for a bus somewhere in Florida when this awful guy came up to us, saying: -- and where are you coming from? -- and you said I was born in Scotland -- the guy shot back "to me you look like a Jap" (this was shortly after Pearl Harbour) -- then our lengthy stay in the Mayflower Hotel in New York being sick with the flu and cancelling a concert in Albany -- that's where I met your wonderful parents who took good care of your sickness -- you were visited (in person and on the phone) by all the greats in the music world -- I remember Feuermann and others whom you talked to, each in his own language -- I was so impressed + you recovered enough for our Town Hall recital -- my God -- my first time in that hallowed place and that both the "Kreutzer Sonata" -- how I got through that devilish piece of music I still don't know --



later on we heard who all were at the concert  
— Schnabel, Bartlett and Robertson, Szell,  
Teuermann, I think Rachmaninov, and the  
other great Piano Duo, Jabin and Bronsky,  
how I got through this at age 26 and green  
after only a few months in America —  
the next time I played in Town Hall  
was in the recital with Terence Molnar —  
— in between all this was our existence in  
San Francisco — my playing for your  
lessons and classes and getting to know  
a lot of repertoire unknown to me but  
taught <sup>by me</sup> by you (Rondo Capriccioso by Saint  
Saëns and a whole lot of real virtuoso pieces)  
— I remember parties at the house of my  
first acquaintance with armenians  
a boy named Bob Yacoubian studied with  
you — and many others — there was so much  
jealousy between your students and the  
ones of Naoum Glinder for those students  
I also played — no one had ever told me the  
terrible story of the Turks and the arme-  
nians and their massacre — later on when I  
had my sabbatical in Turkey in 1979 I made  
myself very unpopular with the Turks, telling the  
Armenian side of it — I just got through talking  
to you on the phone — I had forgotten the Honey moon  
trip to Cœur d'Alène at the palacial home of Mrs. Gray  
— we started calling it the concert moon and honey-trip  
— yes, and my cat or yours? Pizzicato — I am down  
to one lady cat now, named Madeleine, daughter of  
Charisma who died, she was most gorgeous — and so is the  
daughter — I had 5 cats at one point — she is my only  
company — do you remember my Service Men's Sym-  
phony Orchestra? one time you played the 1st movement  
of the Brahms Concerto and I conducted by heart — you  
said "Bravo, Carl" — I did a couple of recitals with Schuster  
also — talking of cellists our friend Luigi Silva died at  
age 58 in New York at the time he was teaching at 3 schools —  
Guilliard, Yale, Hartford I believe — a little  
and Mannes too much —



HAPPINESS IS BEING  
THE LEADER



So many other memories come to me — even the one in some restaurant in San Francisco — I apparently didn't appreciate the food enough and I hear in my mind your punishing remark: "Carl, you don't deserve a good meal!" Do you remember the wonderful soirees at the palatial (palacial?) homes of Mrs. Koshland, Stern etc. in the years 1939 to 45 with the chamber music sessions following the banquets? Yes, those were the days, hard to believe nowadays! One night I was invited to a pre Opera dinner (with Lily Pons in a big role, I've forgotten which) on one side of me sat the Merckas, on the other the Montoux — my God what times were those — on the big parties in the estate of Mrs. Stern in Atherton with all the famous visiting string quartets and the conductors invited — once I had the honor to turn the pages for George Szell — I never learned so much as on that session of chamber music!! Well, "Tempi passati!" — I did see you once in a rehearsal with your orchestra, that was in my short interregnum between Provo and Bloomington the end of 50s and beginning of 60s — you rehearsed a piece with Primrose (what could that have been??) well, enough of reminiscences — about me — I got to IU in Bloomington in 1963 — before that I lived for a short



time in Hollywood - travelling and touring in between with many singers and instrumentalists - 5 times through Alaska - many concerts with the Cesare Balletti, all over America, then I was for ten summers a member of the Summer Academy of the Mozarteum in Salzburg, then 4 summers in Graz, then with Festa Musica Pro in Assisi - also with the International Convention of Voice Teachers in my home town, Strasbourg (Strasbourg) and toured extensively. Here at IU I was the Principal Opera Coach for the famous Opera Theater of the (famous) IU music School - my colleagues were and are Joseph Gingold, Franco Gulli, William Primrose, Janos Starker - and others - I had at first many chances for conducting, but then, by and by, that dribbled away - finally I got the conductorship of the Bloomington Symphony Orchestra, a non-professional outside group which I lead for 6 marvellous seasons before politics and intrigues of the dirtiest kind stole it from me - the only thing I really enjoyed perhaps in the latter part of my career - I was retired against my will in 1982 and am since then unhappy, frustrated - and poor - I'm trying to do



HAPPINESS IS BEING  
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IV

some composing again - but private  
work in coaching is difficult to get  
once you are retired - in other words  
made into scrap iron - zum atten  
Eisen gelegt - - it's ridiculous, I'm  
just as good in master classes as  
I was 4 years ago - - now personal  
things: my mother whom you knew  
well, died in 1970 (not with cancer,  
and painlessly) but she simply was  
extinguished like a flame burn-  
ing brightly for 91 years - - my  
ten years older brother in San Francisco  
got retired (also against his will)  
in 1979 then went through a decade  
of operations and great suffering till his



painful death 2 years ago. His son,  
Ronald is director of the Community  
Hospital in Carmel, Calif. his wife  
is from Basel, Switzerland — they have  
3 children, the older girl is married to  
a boy in Industry (oil) transferred  
lately to Buffalo — the younger girl  
a brilliant career girl in diplomacy  
and international law lives in  
Boston, and the youngest, a boy, is just  
now entering College (U C Santa Barbara)  
My brother's daughter (twin of Ronald  
the doctor) is a very well known  
dancer and choreographer till now  
at the Civic Ballet in Nashville —  
her husband the director just divorced  
her after 2 2 years of marriage!!! They  
have one daughter, just entering College.  
So that's some of my history in a nut-  
shell — — Here in Bloomington I ex-  
perienced a lot of set backs, perso-  
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but I guess you have to expect that  
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THE LEADER



V

New York where I was active  
5 more or less turbulent years  
was much more disgusting than  
here — — —  
So, now when I do come by Southern  
California sometime I will look  
you up — If we both are still  
here — — — my ailment, by the  
way, on my leg, was called cellul-  
litis — it's a matter of bad  
circulation — but it's totally  
abated by now.  
Henri, by now you probably will



have recovered from the initial  
shock of hearing so suddenly  
from somebody of the deepest  
past - after not having had any  
contact in many years!!

I wish you now all the best  
and to the lovely Emmy, too -  
is she still so beautifully  
blond, or perhaps already white?

And where and how old is  
Fanny, the creator of the reptile?

So long then, all good wishes -  
and let me hear from you!

Your admiring friend

Carl



[[Nick Dante 10/9/17]]

[[Henri Temianka Correspondence  
Carl Fuerstner  
Letter #1]]

[[Page 1 – Letter]]

[[Letterhead: Carl Fuerstner  
2518 East Seventh St.  
Bloomington, Indiana 47401]]

September 15, 1991

Dear Henri,

I'd be curious to see the look of astonishment on your face when you'll receive this letter from me! I am certain, however, that you haven't thought of me half as much in the past 30 or more years as I have of you! The fact is that every single time I pass my book case with your wonderful book in it (and there must be hundreds of [[written between lines:]] (I mean time) them) I make a big resolution to finally go to it and write to you the next day – and then I do not do it again and again – although there are quite a number of outward events that should give me an immediate reason to take up the pen – there are so many things in my memory – little bon mots and anecdotes which I regularly relate to my friends who inquire about my past and want to write my life story or even a biography – and then one of these leads to the other, and pretty soon an entire period of my past emerges into my consciousness, and with it events and people that I had almost forgotten – many of all this is connected with you and your extraordinary personality, your wit and sense of humor as well as remarks during rehearsals and while driving in cars or flying in planes or riding in trains (in these mideaval times when we still used these old-fashioned conveyances) – in short, you have no idea how very much I remember of you and about you, going back all the way to 1939 and then up into the 50s!!



[[Page 2 – Letter]]

However, when I start remembering you now and telling stories and remarks and incidents – one keeps coming up most frequently – and that is not really about you – it is – my prime funny story which I tell in every gathering or in any party; something which constantly evokes enormous hilarity, in fact it is my top story in front of people – a story which has to be anticipated by another one, not in connection with you, remember Harold Wolf the one – time concertmaster of the Utah Symphony still under Abravanel his little teenage daughter asked her mother who was Turkish why they couldn't have a Christian Christmas with tree and the whole [[dingsbums?]], like all the other children, the mother answered and said you see we can't do that – your father is a Jew and I am your mother from Turkey – the girl, growing up among Mormon children, said: but Mother, can't we be Jack Jews:?? – This precious remark, possible only among Mormon people, is then Copped by the priceless utterance of your son Danny who was observed playing in the yard in Provo by Emmy with the other little boys who asked him the fatal question: Are you a Mormon? Whereupon your son came forth with “no, my father is a Jew and my mother Is a reptile” - - - I hope you haven't forgotten this story – it still brings tears of laughter to my eyes – and usually brings the present company to yelling and screaming – - - so you see I'm stealing your stories in my parties – this last one never fails – but there are many other things sticking in my mind, remarks and jokes – also predictions – I see you sitting in my shabby little apartment in San Francisco together with the Mosess and other mostly medical friends - - the day was June 22, 1941, the day the Germans invaded Russia – and you said: The German Army will be at the gates of Moscow in 6 weeks (and it



[[Page 3 – Letter]]

II

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[[Page 4 – Letter]]

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[[^]] and Mannes [[^]] too much - -



[[Page 5 – Letter]]

III

[[Letterhead:  
HAPPINESS IS BEING  
THE LEADER]]

[[image- illustration  
of a lion conductor]]

So many other memories come to me – even the one in some restaurant in San Francisco – I apparently didn’t appreciate the food enough and I hear in my mind your punishing remark: “Carl, you don’t deserve a good meal!” Do you remember the wonderful soirees at the palatial (palacial?) homes of Mrs. Koshland Stern etc. in the years 1939 to 45? With the chamber music sessions following the banquets? Yes, those were the days, hard to believe nowadays! One night I was invited to a pre Opera dinner (with Lily Pons in a big role, I’ve forgotten which) on one side of me sat the Merolas, on the other the Monteuxs – my god what times were those – or the big parties in the estate of Mrs. Stern in Atherton with all the famous visiting String quartets and all the conductors invited – once I had the honor to turn the pages for George Szell – I never learned so much as on that session of chamber music!! Well, “tempipasati!” – I did see you once in a rehearsal with your orchestra, that was in my short interregnum between Provo and Bloomington the end of 50s and beginning of 60s – you rehearsed a piece with Primrose (what could that have been?? – Well, enough of reminiscences – about me - - ? I got to see in Bloomington in n1963 – before that I lived for a short

[[Page 6 – Letter]]

time in Hollywood – traveling and touring in between with many singers and instrumentalists – 5 times through Alaska – many concerts with Cesare Valletti all over America, then I was for ten summers a member of the Summer Academy of the Mozarteum in Salzburg then 4 summers in Graz, then with Festa Musica Pro in Assisi – also with the International Convention of Voice Teachers in my home town, Strasbourg (Strassburg) and toured extensively. There at Ill I was the Principal Opera Coach for the famous Opera Theater of the (famous) Ill Music School – my colleagues were and are Joseph Gingold, Franco Gulli, William Primrose, Janos Starker – and others – I had at first many chances for conducting, but then, by and by, that dribbled away – finally I got the conductorship of the Bloomington Symphony Orchestra a nonprofessional outside group which I lead for 6 marvellous seasons before politics and intrigues of the dirtiest kind stole it from me – the only thing I really enjoyed perhaps in the latter part of my career – I was retired against my will in 1982 and am since then unhappy, frustrated – and poor – I’m trying to do



[[Page 7 – Letter]]

[[Letterhead:  
HAPPINESS IS BEING  
THE LEADER]]

[[image- illustration            IV  
of a lion conductor]]

some composing again – but private work in coaching is difficult to get once you are retired – in other words made into scrap iron -- zum alten eisen gelegt [[\*]] – it’s ridiculous, I’m just as good in master classes as I was 4 years ago - - now personal things: my mother whom you knew well, died in 1970 (not with cancer, and painlessly, but she simply was extinguished like a flame burning brightly for 91 years - - my ten years older brother in San Francisco got retired (also against his will) in 1979 then went through a decade of operations and great suffering till his

[[\* german translation: “to become the old iron”]]

[[Page 8 – Letter]]

painful death 2 years ago. His son, Ronald is director of the community Hospital in Carmel, Calif. His wife is from Basel, Switzerland—they have 3 children, the older girl is married to a boy in Industry (Oil) transferred lately to Buffalo – the younger girl a brilliant career girl in diplomacy and international law lives in Boston, and the youngest, a boy, is just now entering College (UC Santa Barbara) My brothers daughter (“Cousin” of Ronald the doctor) is a very well known dancer and choreographer till now at the Civic Ballet in Nashville – her husband the director just divorced her after 22 years of marriage!!! They have one daughter, just entering College. So that’s some of my history in a nutshell - - Here in Bloomington I experienced a lot of set backs, personal blows, defeats and adversity- but I guess you have to expect that in any professional surrounding – not only in music - - I can only say, the atmosphere in Rochester,



[[Page 9 – Letter]]

[[Letterhead:  
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[[image- illustration            V  
of a lion conductor]]

New York where I was active  
5 more or less turbulent years  
was much more disgusting than  
here - -  
So now when I do come by Southern  
California sometime I will look  
you up – If we both are still  
here - - - - my ailment, by the  
way, on my leg, was called cellu-  
litis – it’s a matter of bad  
circulation – but it has totally  
abated by now.  
Henri, by now you probably will

[[Page 10 – Letter]]

have recovered from the initial  
shock of hearing so suddenly  
from somebody of the deepest  
past – after not having had any  
contact in many years!!

I wish you now all the best  
and to the lovely Emmy too –  
is she still so beautifully  
blond, or perhaps already white?  
And where and how old is  
Danny, the creator of the reptile?  
So long then, all good wishes –  
and let me hear from you!

Your admiring friend

Carl