October 26th, 1976

Mr. and Mrs. Arthur Rubinstein
Hotel Drake
440 Park Avenue
New York 10022

Dear Mr. and Mrs. Rubinstein:

We at Town Hall are so very grateful that you have joined the Committee for the Sunday, November 14th Gala celebration. When you wrote me from France this summer, your enthusiastic letter brought me the good news that you were hoping to actually be with us in the Hall that evening, but that you would let me know closer to the date.

I wanted to let you know that I am holding for you two excellent Patron seats for the concert.

I am enclosing material that will give you some idea of the scope of the evening. As you can see, many of your friends and colleagues will be celebrating with us that evening.

Much respect,

Donald F. Smith

DFS:c
MORE GOOD NEWS CONCERNING TOWN HALL GALA.

Arthur Rubinstein, Mr. and Mrs. Vladimir Horovitz. Mr. and Mrs. Eugene Istomin and Miss Martha Graham (who danced at the Hall with Ruth St. Denis in 1923) have all recently joined the Town Hall Gala Committee.

Additional hosts and hostesses on stage that evening will be Brendan Gill, Francis Robinson, Rex Reed, Leonard Harris, Frances Gershwin Godowsky and Abram Chasins. Metropolitan Opera's John Alexander and Jazz great Anita Ellis will perform.
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

SUBJECT: "Town Hall Tonight" Gala Concert
55th Anniversary of Town Hall

WHERE: Town Hall, 123 West 43 Street, New York City 10036
WHEN: November 14, Sunday, 7:30 p.m.

To celebrate the 55th Birthday of Town Hall, a Gala Concert--TOWN HALL TONIGHT!, conceived and produced by Donald Smith--will be presented on Sunday evening, November 14, at 7:30 p.m. at Town Hall. The evening will be cast with a select group of artists associated, because of past performances and recitals, with Town Hall and the greatness it exemplifies. The evening will also present outstanding artists who will be making their Town Hall debuts that evening. By so doing, the evening will be not only a loving salute to Town Hall's extraordinary past but a vibrant and positive affirmation of its future.

Few people remember that in the Spring of 1894, many women and fewer men fought for an amendment to the Constitution of New York State for the right to vote. They were defeated overwhelmingly. For a quarter of a century longer, women citizens--like imbeciles, convicts and Indians--were to be denied that right. Leaders among them were good losers. They knew they had to be. They did not bow to defeat; they learned from it.

(more)
In the autumn of 1894, six of these women met in the home of Mrs. Henry M. Sanders. They asked themselves why they were defeated the previous Spring and agreed it was because of lack of political education. Then and there, on Nov. 16, 1894, at 433 Fifth Avenue, The League for Political Education was organized with Eleanor Butler Sanders as its President.

27 years later, The Town Hall, at 123 West 43 Street, was erected and ultimately the League's name was changed to that of the building it owned and lived in. Since 1921, the Hall served as a platform for lectures on literature, art, philosophy, science, as well as on citizenship, public affairs, economics. In addition, its superb acoustics and extraordinary sight lines made it one of the most in-demand concert halls in all the world. And all this came about because six dedicated women had a dream and fought for that dream.

They saw their dream realized and in their words "It does not matter who you are, what you are, or from where you came, you are welcome here. Whether man or woman, of whatever race, creed or party, whether New Yorker or from the North, South, East or West, or from across the seas—you are welcome. The Town Hall is for people—all kinds. Life does not turn out finished products. Not one of us is finished, nor is human society. Growth is the law of life. Grow without limit or finality.

"The Town Hall is for progress, not standing still or slipping back; for life, not decline or decay; for faith, not doubt or unbelief; for growth, not for a time but for all time." This is what we celebrate on Sunday, November 14.

(more)
Marian Anderson, who made her debut there in 1924, is Honorary Chairman, and will be with us on that evening. Jorge Bolet, whose pianism is without peer in the world today and who made his debut at Town Hall, will perform in the first part of the program. Tenor Jan Peerce, who also made his debut there, will participate, as will American composer Virgil Thomson, who celebrates his 80th Birthday in November and who spent over fifteen years reviewing events in Town Hall. Soprano Bidu Sayao, who made her American debut at the Hall, has planned a surprise for the program. Violist Raphael Hillyer, sopranos Licia Albanese and Maria Jeritza and pianists Eugene List, Leonard Pennario and Constance Keene are also committed to appear. The Italian diva Renata Scotto will be making her Town Hall debut that evening. The final movement of the Brahms G minor Quartet will be performed. Cellist Gregor Piatigorsky had graciously consented to play; the Brahms work will be dedicated to Maestro Piatigorsky's memory.

The Town Hall Board's joy in knowing that Madame Lotte Lehmann and Madame Gina Bachauer had both joined the Gala Committee turned to sadness at the recent loss of these two artists. Madame Lehmann had committed to paper her own intimate feelings for having performed at Town Hall during her now legendary lieder concerts. Her letter will be included in a tribute to her during the concert. And the entire evening will be dedicated to the memory of all three artists of world fame—Piatigorsky, Lehmann and Bachauer.

Other artists invited to perform in Part One include Elisabeth Schwarzkopf, Julian Bream, Zinka Milanov, Artur Rubinstein, Plácido Domingo, Yehudi Menuhin, Van Cliburn, Martina Arroyo, Henryk Szeryng. (more)
Part Two of the Gala, a salute to Town Hall's successful "Interludes" series, will feature a panorama of America's popular artists--Bobby Short, Mabel Mercer, Hildegarde, Greta Keller, Cy Coleman, Eubie Blake, Hazel Scott, Sylvia Syms, Ronny Whyte, Marian McPartland, Nancy Dussault, Karen Morrow, Barbara Cook, Mary Lou Williams and more. Among those invited to be hosts and hostesses for the evening are Gretchen Wyler, Leonard Harris, Rex Reed, Polly Bergen, Bette Davis, John V. Lindsay, Abram Chasins, Brendan Gill, Francis Robinson and Leonard Bernstein.

Donald Saddler, the Tony Award-winning choreographer and dance director, has volunteered to stage the evening; Gilbert Hensley will design the lighting. And the Gala Committee, numbering over eighty illustrious personalities, includes Rise Stevens, Norman Cousins, Ambassador and Mrs. George Jay Feldman, Dorothy Maynor, Peter Mennin, Robert Merrill, Leontyne Price, Mrs. Samuel Newhouse, Mrs. Donald Stalem, Alexandra Danilova, Patrice Munsel, Ethel Barrymore Colt, Mrs. George Zauderer, George Cukor, Alec Wilder, Norman Dello Joio, Eleanor Steber, Joseph Machlis, Mrs. Clyde Newhouse, Benny Goodman, Celeste Holm, Winifred Cecil, Claudette Sorel, Shirley Verrett.

This is a one-night-only benefit, a major effort to provide the basis of a sound financial future for Town Hall's continued operation. All proceeds from the evening will directly benefit the Town Hall Fund. For further information and photos concerning the Gala contact Donald Smith Promotions, 125 East 73 Street, New York, N.Y. 10021, (212) 879 4354. For ticket information telephone (212) 879 4890, or by mail to 125 East 73 St., New York, N.Y. 10021.