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JOE R. DAVIDSON

February 18, 1975

Arthur Rubinstein
The Dwake Hotel
440 Park Avenue at 56th. Street
New York, New York 10022

RE: David Smith

Dear Mr. Rubinstein:

Thank you and I do understand and respect your firm decision in the negative and have disregarded the idea.

After speaking with Mrs. Clemans and then receiving your letter, I am enclosing some information on Mr. Smith and trust that you will understand my contacting you.

Mr. Smith recalls that you stated that the only time that you liked the playing of the Ravel Toccata was when Smith played the Toccata for you. I know that your statements were made years ago and that you understand how your comments can make indelible marks on one's memory.

1940

Now that Mr. Smith's son has entered Harvard Medical School on scholarship, Mr. Smith will try to concertize, again, after teaching and raising a family.

With warmest regards and wishes for your continued good health and happiness, I am

Devotedly yours,

Joe R. Davidson
JOE R. DAVIDSON

PS - Any recollections you may have regarding Mr. Smith would be most appreciated.

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Concerts, Records, Travel Keep Noted Pianist Busy

Arthur Rubenstein, Now Appearing Here, Also Is Trying to Write Autobiography

1943

Artur Rubinstein is a busy man.

The widely acclaimed pianist appeared Friday afternoon and will appear Saturday evening as soloist with the Cincinnati Symphony Orchestra at Music Hall.

At the moment Mr. Rubinstein is trying to find time to write his autobiography.

"It is hard to write about for I am too shy and my life has been too naughty," he said Friday.

He also continues as something of a globe trotter.

Globe trotting, what with wartime transportation, is not proving too difficult, he said.

In 40 years of traveling, Mr. Rubinstein has covered over 1,000,000 miles. In four months from now he expects to be in Buenos Aires, next month in Albuquerque. Other trips will keep him fairly hopping.

Keeping up with his recordings, for he is one of the recording industry's biggest sellers, is a job in itself.

Mr. Rubinstein's discs alone annually gross over $500,000. His Tchaikovsky Concerto No. 1, recently popularized by Freddie Martin, sold an estimated 200,000 albums; his Grieg Piano Concerto, in its first three months sold more than 100,000 sets. This was in addition to many other recordings.

His great feeling for music and his mastery of the piano bring him a steady income of over $100,000 a year.

Mr. Rubinstein is interested in up and coming young performers.

After hearing David Smith, pupil of Mr. Rubinstein's good friend, Dr. Karol Liszniewski of the Conservatory of Music, he predicts a great future for the young pianist and said he would make every effort to encourage him.

OLYMPIC [illegible]
[illegible] President and General Manager

April 5th
1945

My dear David -
Thanks for your letter
and the nice things
you say about me.
Unfortunately, it is
impossible for me to
do anything this summer
in way of lessons.
I finish my tour only
in the middle of the
than must go to New York
to do some recording ---
and June 1st I go with
my family to South America
for 2-3 months.
I hope to be able to do
something next year.
Inspite of being an artist,
I am not mercenary and
would gladly teach you
for the pleasure of ...
Yours very sincerely
Arthur Rubinstein

DAVID SMITH

Born in Portland, Oregon, in 1924, David Smith received his first lessons at the piano from his mother. At the age of twelve, he won the highest award given by the Oregon Federation of Music Clubs. Van Hoogstraaten, famous Dutch conductor, heard him play and invited him to be soloist with the Portland Symphony Orchestra. It was the first time in the history of that society that a child had been accorded this honour. His performance created quite a furore and the critics were unstinted in their praise.

When Dr. Karol Liszniewski first heard David play he was convinced of the boy's talent. Four years later he brought David to his home in Cincinnati. There the young man played for Emanuel Feuermann, Mieczyslaw Munz, Jose Iturbi and Artur Rubinstein. In an interview, Rubinstein stated, "After hearing David Smith, I predict a great future for the young pianist. I will make every effort to encourage him."

In 1940, David won the National Edgar Stillman-Kelley Scholarship. Recordings were sent to New York in order to make the final decision. Three eminent musicians were convinced that the boy had submitted an unfamiliar recording of an established artist and that it was either a colossal hoax, or an unknown genius was hidden in Cincinnati.

NEW AMERICAN PIANIS

David was the initial winner of this scholarship and was, as such, presented with sensational success in Los Angeles, June 1941, at the Biennial Convention of the National Federation of Music Clubs. There he was given a special award from Josef Hofmann. Anton Hofmann, representing his father, who was in a hospital at the time, made the following statement, "It is indeed a great honour to place into your competent pianistic hands this treasured autographed first edition of my father's Golden Jubilee Concert. I hope that you will honour me with one of your Golden Jubilee Programs, which I am sure will be another milestone in music history."

It is most fortunate that this "phenomenal talent whom nature has endowed in every respect" was allowed to develop at his own speed so that his promise can be fully realized. For this reason, Dr. Liszniewski did not permit young Smith to concertize until this year.

He made his New York debut at Town Hall, November 5, 1944.

"The season's greatest Piano playing... in the same category as Arthur Rubinstein." *WASHINGTON, D.C. TIMES-HERALD*

DAVID SMITH

LONDON CONCERT – WIGMORE HALL, 16TH JUNE 1971

LONDON PREVIEW albums – including piano works of Chopin, Scarlatti, Rachmaninoff, an original étude tableau entitled "Ondine", and the "Carmen Variations a la Horowitz" – will be mailed by the COLLEGE BOOK STORE, SOUTHWESTERN OREGON COMMUNITY COLLEGE, COOS BAY, OREGON 97420 upon request. Price: $2.50 each ($3.60 outside U.S.A.).

"The artist is master of every phase of pianism." — *WASHINGTON, D.C. EVENING STAR*

"His great feeling for the piano ensures inspired performances on all occasions." — *THOR JOHNSON*

"Wonderful talent... After hearing David Smith, I predict a great future." — *ARTHUR RUBINSTEIN*

"He is destined to establish an outstanding name in the ranks of truly gifted pianists." — *EUGENE GOOSSENS*

"A genius!" — *SERGE KOUSSEVITZKY*

"It is indeed a great honor to place into your competent pianistic hands this treasured autographed first edition of my father's Golden Jubilee Concert. I hope that you will honor me with one of your Golden Jubilee Programs, which I am sure will be another milestone in music history." — *ANTON HOFFMAN*

"One of the most artistically satisfying events of the year." *OREGON JOURNAL*

"He not only electrified his audience, but the orchestra members as well." *PORTLAND OREGONIAN*

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PRESS NOTES

"He left Charlotte music lovers with the memory of one of the most satisfying evenings of their lives."
CHARLOTTE, N.C., NEWS

Widest Sonority

His mastery of the instrument extends far beyond the phenomena of digital dexterity even raised to the nth power. His address is with musical ideas as they may be defined in the sounds of the piano. It is an acoustic art of the widest possible sonority and all these contrasting ideas in sound are made the decisive factors in his musical address.

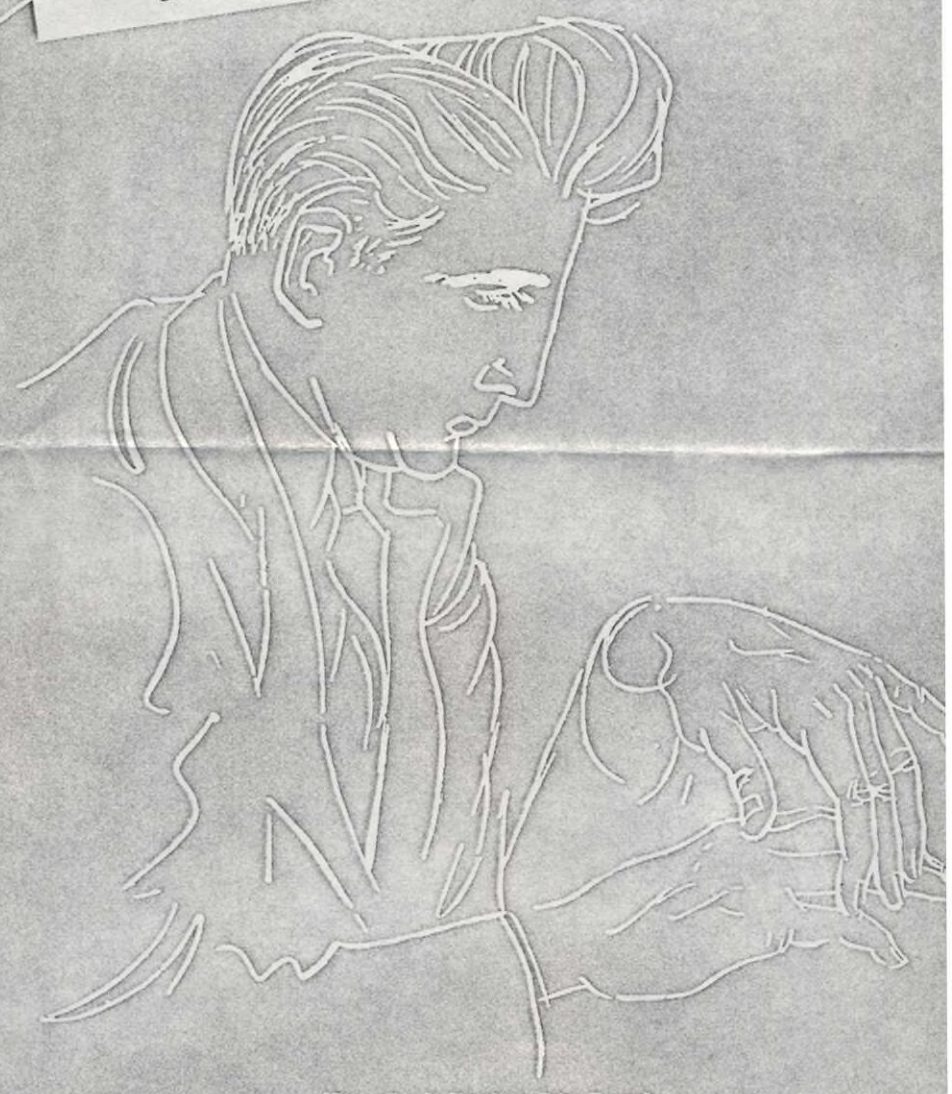
So certain is his taste and musical feeling that he played the imposing Busoni setting, the Bach C major Toccata, Aria, and Fugue as objectively as Busoni himself did. For him Scarlatti remained a fragile echo from the past

Surpasses Rachmaninoff

He lifted the Chopin B minor Sonata to heights of lyric virtuosity that only a Godowsky in his prime might have equaled. He surpassed Rachmaninoff in that master's bravura B flat Prelude, and moved into the Debussy - Ravel and world of the impressionists with the same vivid imagination, tempered by Gallic taste and unextravagance.

He had an enormous success with the National Gallery of Art audience, a critical group.

WASHINGTON, D.C.
TIMES-HERALD



[Times-Herald Sketch by Brian Brown]

David Smith, 'American Horowitz

David Smith, whose spectacular technical equipment has caused him to be dubbed "the American Horowitz," made his first professional appearance at the age of 12 with the Portland Orchestra, under the baton of the noted Willem Van Hoogstraaten.

Never before had the symphony accorded such honor to a child. But it was not in vain for the reviewers pronounced his performance "incredible."

National renown came to the pianist in 1940 when he won top honors in the Edgar Stillman-Kelley Scholarship contest. Eminent New York music critics—among them the late Leonard Liebling, editor of "Musical Courier"—who heard young Smith's recorded entries, insisted that they were either "a gigantic hoax" or that "an unknown genius was hidden in Cincinnati." Assured beyond a doubt that the recordings had been made by the 12-year-old contestant, the judges awarded Smith first prize.

David Smith's first Washington recital occurred last season at the National Gallery of Art. His playing, easily transcending all problems of technique and interpretation, was magnificent. He has the heart and hands to give the piano a song that all the world should rejoice to hear.

—DONALD VAIL ALLEN

"...dazzling...breath-taking display of virtuosity."
PORTLAND OREGON JOURNAL

"Ovations for David Smith shook the rafters of famous Music Hall."
CINCINNATI ENQUIRER

Music Made to Live

What makes David Smith's playing at this point unusual is his capacity for making his music alive, fresh, arresting. This quality is compounded of poetry and dynamic vitality, something which every good pianist has in some degree but which in Mr. Smith's case possesses an urgency that is virtually hypnotic. When he played the Albeniz-Godowsky "Triana" one was practically lifted out of his chair and when he stormed through "the" Chopin polonaise the spirit and message of his performance were such that it would have marshaled people to arms for even a trivial cause.

PORTLAND OREGONIAN

"...fiery...extraordinary imagination..." NEW YORK POST

"...extraordinary vitality...brilliant..." NEW YORK TIMES

"...spellbinding..." MIDDLEBURY COLLEGE

"David Smith is a human dynamo at the piano." Willem Van Hoogstraaten.

"Not only is he equipped with a quite fantastic technique, but the natural musicality of his pianism must be heard to be believed!"
Eugene Goossens

Musician of the Week
David Smith

1940

First broadcast of a genius—this teen-age lad may make it Saturday

IF YOU listen to the program of the Cincinnati Conservatory of Music on Saturday morning, December 21 (CBS), you may find that you have heard the first broadcast of a genius. At least, that's the opinion of three musical experts —but here's the story.

DAVID SMITH of the Cincinnati Conservatory

About a month ago three eminent New York musicians gathered at the home of one of them to pick a winner for the Edgar Stillman Kelley Junior Scholarship presented by the National Federation of Music Clubs to talented young music students up to the age of fifteen. Thirty-four contestants from nine states had taken part, and all but six finalists had been eliminated. These six had sent in recordings of their playing, from which the final decision was to be made. The judges were Adelaide Gescheidt, noted voice teacher and coach; Henry Holden Huss, pianist-composer; and Leonard Liebling, editor-in-chief of the *Musical Courier*, and formerly editor of this department.

The three judges listened to the records, forming their opinions. They arrived at the last batch, three sent by a contestant from Cincinnati, a pianist. The selections were Chopin's F minor Ballade, a Paganini-Liszt Caprice, Rimsky-Korsakoff's "The Bee," all of them difficult even for a virtuoso, much less a fifteen-year-old student. The first piece played was the Caprice. The judges listened in silence for a few minutes, the expression on their faces changing from studious attention to bewildered astonishment. Leonard Liebling jumped up.

"I don't believe it," he said.

The other two judges also rose from their seats.

"Who did you say played this?" Liebling asked.

Mme. Gescheidt stopped the record and they crowded around. The record read, "Played by David Smith." The judges looked up what information they had received on David Smith: "Fifteen years old, a pupil of Dr. Karol Liszniewski of Cincinnati."

"It's a fake," declared Liebling flatly. "It's simply incredible that a boy of fifteen could play like that and not be internationally famous. I have heard some of the greatest pianists when they were fifteen and they didn't do any better than this young Smith. I can't believe that Eugene Goossens (conductor of the Cincinnati Symphony) wouldn't know about such a talent and have presented him publicly."

The other two judges reluctantly agreed with him, but even their reluctance faded when they heard the other pieces. They unanimously declared that either it was a colossal hoax, or an unknown genius was hidden in Cincinnati. They finally decided to award David Smith the scholarship if it could be proved that there was such a person, and that he had actually made the records.

A week later a letter from Dr. Liszniewski was received by the judges. It not only proved conclusively that there is a David Smith but also that he had made the records. Dr. Liszniewski added:

"The boy is a phenomenal talent whom nature has endowed in every respect. He lives at my house and goes to high school, where he is an outstanding student. David will play the Chopin E minor Concerto with the Cincinnati Conservatory Orchestra on one of our Saturday Columbia broadcasts shortly."

"Shortly" will be on December 21. Listen and see if you concur with the judges' amaz-

FROM THE DECEMBER, 1940 MOVIE AND RADIO GUIDE

FEB 1968