1, Ashfield Grove,
WHITLEY BAY,
Tyne & Wear.
NE26 1RT
ENGLAND.

29th., February. '82

Dear Mr. Rubinstein,

You are a great, outstanding pianist, one of the best of our time, but I am hardly known. I intend to become the next great pianist and I will fight hard to acheive this aim. I am writing to you to ask for your advice. I am fifteen years old and after my A-levels, I want to enter the Royal Academy of Music in London.

Could you tell me how I should plan my career as a musician. How did you get to your position? What would you do if you were in my place? Many distinguished musicians have praised my playing in competitions but no offers have been made. I realise music is a very tough business and therefore I seek the best advice. I appreciate that you are a very busy man but I would be extremely grateful for any advice you can give me.

I think my two favourite piano composers are Chopin and Brahms. Their music is so passionate and intense. I find your recordings of Chopin's piano music very helpful when tackling for example a Nocturne.

However, I do not think anyone will better your interpretations of Chopin's piano music. Each time I listen to you, I hear something more and I can feel the music within me.

What do you think of 20th century piano music? I think it is very exciting and I love to play it. Older musicians find it difficult to understand and many dislike it. I recently played a Toccata by Khachaturian which was written in 1932. It was very exciting, ferocious and even barbaric! I also like the music of Shostakovitch, Britten, Provokief, Bartok, Frank Bridge and others.

I am absolutely certain that I want to become a pianist and so I ask the greatest pianist what his life is like? How much did you practice at my age? What was your daily routine like when you were about 30? What aspect of music gives you the most pleasure?

I know you are very busy and must receive many letters. Please do not disregard this one - it is very important to me and I shall treasure and always remember the advice the world's greatest pianist gave me.

Please help me - I shall be eternally grateful. I take this opportunity in thanking you from the depths of my heart.

Yours sincerely,

Geoffrey J. Smith

Geoffrey J. Smith (15 years)