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## Henri Temianka Correspondence; (catlin)

Dan Catlin

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## Henri Temianka Correspondence; (catlin)

### 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, Dan Catlin, February 28, 1991, virtuosity in musical performance, culture, violinist, violin, chamber music, camaraderie, musical recordings, humour, Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart, Luciano Pavarotti

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CONCORD, MASSACHUSETTS 01742

28 February 1991

Dear Henri:

I wanted to write you as soon as I got back to Concord, first, with my thanks to you and Emmy for the lovely day we had together; second, for the CD of Vintage Temianka, which I will treasure; and third, about your manuscript, which, I assume, you already have back with my note from San Francisco saying that I had read it all.

It will not surprise you, I suspect, that I myself much enjoyed reading more about you and your extraordinary life; after all, I know you abit, and we have worked together and been friends. Many parts of the manuscript I enjoyed very much, especially the comic story about the canary and the ventriloquist dog and the Mozart aria. (I laughed right out loud, and I am still chuckling!!). But candidly, which I know you would want me to be, I do not think this manuscript is yet a salable book: it is the raw material for a book. Because a book must have a beginning, middle, end, and point (or focus). Because it has to be sold, and not only to those like me who are already pre-sold. I believe you will have to do more work, assuming it can be agreed with a publisher what work ought to be done, and it does occur to me that you may not want to do that. On the other hand, I suspect you do.

Let me give you an analogy. This manuscript is like a handful of uncut diamonds. That is good, because a handful of plain rocks is worthless. What first needs to be done is to decide whether they should be made into a tiara, or a necklace or a choker or a stomacher. Essentially, that is a marketing decision, an evaluation of what sells these days, that is, and Mr. Ettinger is in a much better position to advise you on that than I am, because I am probably not able to advise you at all, being so long gone from the business. When you brought me the draft autobiography that eventually became FTM, "inside" books were "in fashion", and the diamonds in that draft manuscript were eventually organized so that FTM could be focused in literary organization and then sold, not as a biography, but as an insider's view of the concert world. Once that decision was made, you and I began to polish the diamonds, to blue-pencil the manuscript, make all those changes that went back and forth. (We worked hard, as you remember!!). The current manuscript needs alot of polishing and reorganization which I could help you with (for example, I would think it generally unwise to put all



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limericks in one chapter, and all biographic sketches in another), but the real point is that neither you nor I nor anyone else can properly polish any diamonds until it's known how they are to be set, and you cannot polish words until you know how the book is to be oriented and sold. This is what we did with FTM.

I wonder if Mr. Ettinger has given you any ideas for how the book might be focused? That, of course, is the fundamental problem. I confess no obvious solution instantly pops to my own mind, except the obvious ones of 1) rewriting as separate and unconnected magazine articles, and 2) trying to organize it as a biography, which I do not think will attract a commercial publisher, because I do not think the reading public will buy a biography of anyone who is not a self-aggrandising superstar. Pavrotti maybe, just maybe; but you, thank god, no. On the other hand, I have been unable to stop musing about your comment that you would someday like to write what you really think about critics. At 84, you are in a position to write what you REALLY think, because your age makes it clear that you no longer have an ax to grind or position to protect. Thus, you would be (once again) telling it like it is, another sort of inside view made possible because you are finally in a position to rest upon your laurels, and to hell with what anyone else thinks. Now, is there any way to cast the rest of the material you've written in the same light, to view what you have written about from the same perspective? I just don't know. Can you tell what LA was really like? Can you tell what the other musicians were really like? Can the material be organized as "A Concert Musician Looks Back", at the "true", unvarnished story? What would that true story include? Again, I just don't know, as this approach only fits some of what you've written. Anyway, I thought I'd mention these musings, because sometimes a half-formed concept prompts a fully formed one from someone else.

Do let me know what Mr. Ettinger said, or is saying, if only to satisfy my curiosity. And I will keep pondering possibilities to see what, if anything, I can conjure up. You too should be speculating about organization and focus and message, and perhaps the answer will come.

It was a joy to be with you.

*Best as always.*

*Dan.*