

7-24-1946

## Henri Temianka Correspondence; (leonard)

Alfred Leonard

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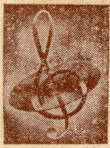
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### Keywords

Henri Temianka, Alfred Leonard, July 24, 1946, culture, virtuosity in musical performance, violinist, chamber music, Jack Hallstrom, money, funds, recreation and entertainment, musical recordings, Gateway to Music



# GATEWAY TO MUSIC

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FINE RECORDS and RADIO-PHONOGRAPHS

24th  
July  
1946

Mr. Jack Hallstrom  
Radio Corporation of America  
RCA Victor Division  
Camden, New Jersey

Dear Jack:

May I recall to your mind part of our conversation when I saw you in New York in June? You mentioned at that time a chamber music project which RCA Victor is contemplating, and in this connection I spoke to you about the Paganini Quartet.

I have since had a chance to hear them, and I can tell you with whatever emphasis my judgment in musical matters may carry that this is going to be one of the finest string quartets to be heard next season, and as long as this group stays together, which I hope will be very long. Each of the members could easily make a success as soloist; and, in fact, Henri Temianka and Robert Maas do. But they, as well as their colleagues, have the heart and mind of true chamber music players; and Temianka, as well as Maas, will hereafter limit their solo appearances to a few weeks of the season, traveling for the rest of the time with the Quartet. Such an arrangement, of course, is possible only because the Quartet is subsidized, leaving all of the members free from any concern to seek other sources of income. I am mentioning this in order to give you a feeling of the sort of group this is going to be, because, as you know, most of the ensembles today can not afford to concentrate on chamber music, and the players must augment their income by teaching, playing in radio and movie studios. These four men, on the other hand, are out here, getting paid to put in a full day's work in preparing for their first appearances next season.

When I heard them a short time ago in San Francisco, they had been together for only a fortnight or so, because the two other Belgians who complete the ensemble had only recently arrived from abroad. It really was amazing how unified their playing was, tonally as well as musically. Of course, three of the men had played together a great deal in Belgium, and the fourth, Henri Temianka, is in every way so akin to their style of playing that the ensemble sounded as though they had been raised in the same school and had played together for years.

Mr. Jack Hallstrom  
July 24th, 1946

While it is difficult to describe the musical satisfaction their playing gave me, it is impossible to give a verbal picture of the beauty and sonority of the four Stradivarius instruments which their patron acquired for them. I think I mentioned to you that they are playing on the four Stradivarius instruments which Paganini had carefully matched and collected for his own chamber music pleasure. Among these instruments is the viola on which Paganini first played "Harold in Italy." But everyone of them is simply superb.

I can not conceive of any other possibility than immediate and sensational success of this group. They will have a most auspicious debut at the Library of Congress, where they will play the complete cycle of Beethoven Quartets. Then they go to New York for the two opening concerts of the New Friends of Music, and several more concerts during the latter part of the season. From New York, they will come to the West Coast, and among numerous other engagements, they will play one concert for us in the Music Guild series.

With all due respect for the Budapest Quartet, I think that it has at long last found a worthy rival. This, combined with the belief that the tonal beauty and opulence of the instruments will be a most important asset in recording, leads me to suggest that you should seriously consider the Paganini Quartet for your chamber music project.

You can reach them by directing your communication to:

Mr. Henri Temianka  
1190 Green Street  
San Francisco 9, California

I will be most interested in hearing from you as to your reactions.

In connection with the Paganini Quartet, as well as with reference to other ideas previously discussed with you, I would like to remind you of the idea of issuing certain types of recordings on a subscription basis. If you see any possibility that the future production situation might permit the materialization of such a plan, please bear in mind that I am most anxious to cooperate, not the least by underwriting a substantial part of certain subscription projects.

Cordially, as always,

ALFRED LEONARD

AL/el