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Henri Temianka Correspondence; (menuhin)

Yehudi Menuhin

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27th September 1985

Dear Henri

Brotsky was on my conscience. I felt I couldn't leave the situation as it was.

I have no idea whether my letter is wise, useful, or to the contrary. At least it is the truth.

It was wonderful being with you and Emma-May.

Love Yehudi

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27th September 1985

Dear Vadim Brodsky

One episode from the Paris Concours keeps haunting me. You have derived no benefit from the Concours at all and we have done nothing to help or to explain.

Whereas I had the strong impression that all the other "candidats" came away with something valuable, even those who received no prizes or mention, I have done nothing to help you.

You played the Prokofiev sonata outstandingly and you received, quite rightly, from all of us on the Jury the very highest or high marks. It was superb violin playing, beautiful interpretation and a mature presentation. Then you played a wilful, totally out-of-character and out-of-style, exaggerated Brahms D Minor, which all members of the Jury found unacceptable.

It seemed to us that it was the performance not wholly in service of the music but rather a performance undisciplined in matters emotional or stylistic, which appeared to exploit the music to personal ends.

My dilemma was that although I was convinced that your concerto would be excellent, we, as a Jury, could not set the seal of highest approval and admiration upon yet another brilliant Tchaikovsky performance so long as we had such serious misgivings about general classical musicianship.

I realised that although we had no way of judging your classical styles nor other more modern works, we were in fact dealing with one of the best violinists in the world. That is why I created a special category of virtuosity and funded the first prize in that category myself.

Your character, as revealed in the interpretation of the Brahms sonata together with your obvious expression, not only of disappointment with which I fully sympathise but of hostility towards us, as well as your mature years, made it difficult to approach you on friendly, concerned and sympathetic ground. This I would love to do if you are able to accept.

With best wishes,

Yehudi Menuhin

Sir Yehudi Menuhin

Monsieur Vadim Brodsky
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