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Henri Temianka Correspondence; (mertens)

Andre Mertens

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H A E N S E L & J O N E S

DIVISION OF

COLUMBIA CONCERTS, INC.

113 WEST FIFTY-SEVENTH STREET · NEW YORK

ANDRÉ MERTENS

CIRCLE 7-6900

CABLE "COLCONCERT"

January 9, 1943 - **Air Mail**

Mr. Henri Temianka
New Ricks House
Rocky Mount, North Carolina

Dear Mr. Temianka:

I would appreciate it very much if you would outline to your friend in Washington the following facts:

I entered the United States on an immigration visa on July 20, 1938. Therefore, according to the law, I should be able to file an application for final citizenship papers after five years, or on July 20, 1943. I understand it is possible to file such an application three months ahead so that I may have my examination by the end of July. I understand also that after I have passed the examination, it will take a minimum of ninety days before papers are issued.

My reason for asking for a speedy conclusion of this, of course, within the time provided by the regulations, is as follows:

You know my background, but I am setting forth here some of the salient facts. After having been a concert manager in Berlin since 1923, the Ministry of Fine Arts made me an Artistic Adviser for Foreign Countries. I did pioneer work to increase the output of German Art to Belgium, France, and especially Spain, and South America. When I was appointed a Director of the State Agency in 1931, my principal task, besides my activity inside Germany, was to use my experience in increasing more and more such cultural exchange between Germany and foreign countries. I am afraid I did a good job, with the result that when Hitler came into power, he could easily maintain an extremely good relationship which had already been established by me.

I resigned from this position of Head of the State Agency in protest of the policies of the Nazis on March 9, 1933. In fact, I am privileged to belong to the first group of people to oppose Hitler and Dr. Goebbels. When I came to this country and when I joined Columbia Concerts in 1940 as a Director of the Corporation, I informed my colleagues about my previous good relationships with the Latin American countries. I was then appointed Head of the South American and Mexican Division of this Corporation and have made it a point to eliminate as much as possible the German cultural influence in this countries which I had previously planted there and to introduce instead North American artists, particularly in the Argentine and in Brazil.

During the first season of this work in 1940, I had many obstacles to overcome because of the very great German and Italian influence in South America, and because of the fact that I was not able to compete with the subsidies which were being given by the German Government. They also had the advantage of a better currency exchange. Despite these obstacles, I was more successful in 1941 and I may say I achieved the utmost during the 1942 season, as may be seen from the enclosed circular. The War, of course, has fortunately helped by reducing the number of importations of German and Italian artists to South America. The time is now ripe for

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entrenching the auspicious start we have made in the last two seasons.

It can be well appreciated that this work must be done by personal contact with the key people in South America by a person with whom these key people have already been dealing for a number of years. My inability to travel to South America hampers my task as I cannot expect the South American managers to continually come to New York to see me. The courtesy of these visits must be exchanged and it would certainly further our mutual interests if I am able to visit them as early as possible in South America.

I cannot afford to leave this country before receiving final American citizenship papers, mainly because of the prestige such citizenship would afford me in the eyes of the Latin-American people. Therefore the speeding up of the machinery in obtaining my citizenship papers would be of tremendous help to the job I am doing in the interests of furthering the cultural exchange between North and South America. In fact, each month of postponement makes my task a little harder.

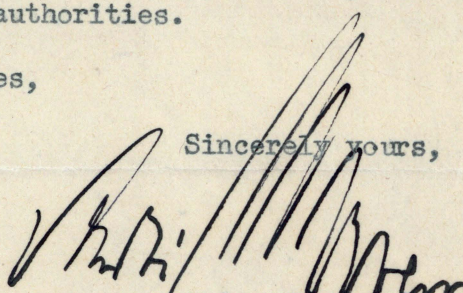
I would like to know to whom I should hand my application for second papers and the earliest date it can be filed. Will you please find out also if it will be advisable for me to inform your friend of the number which will be assigned to my application when it is made?

The form letter accompanying the application forms which I have is signed by Charles P. Muller, District Director of the U. S. Department of Justice, Immigration and Naturalization Service, Federal Building, 641 Washington Street, New York, N. Y.

I cannot tell you how much I appreciate your kindness in helping me to submit my case to the proper authorities.

With all good wishes,

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'Andre Mertens', is written over the typed name and title.

Andre Mertens
In Charge,
South American and Mexican Division

AM:RPB