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Henri Temianka Correspondence; (stern)

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My dear Isaac,

Because this letter will probably take several days to catch up with you, wherever you may be, I am sending it early, so that it may reach you in time for your birthday. Some of the fondest memories of my life are wrapped up in the long friendship that had its beginnings shortly after my arrival in San Francisco at the start of World War II. I was overwhelmed when I heard you play the Sibelius concerto with the orchestra, before we had even met. You were only 19 at the time, but the greatness of your art was already so evident that I could think of little else for days afterwards. Then we met, and there came that wonderful period of string quartet jam sessions late into the night, table-thumping arguments and no end of story telling, an art at which I think we were well matched.

In the 50 years that have passed since then, our friendship inevitably suffered many lapses due to the vicissitudes of our careers. But I can truthfully say that I always felt close to you, filled with wonder and admiration at the range of your accomplishments, be it from Mao to Mozart, Carnegie Hall, or your charitable endeavors, not even to mention your lifelong evolution as an artist, as exemplified in the angelic purity of your G-major Mozart Concerto which I shall always remember.

Many successful artists become increasingly self-involved with the passage of the years. You, to the contrary, have constantly grown in stature, not only as a cultural world leader, but also as a giving, generous, warm-hearted human being and friend.

Emmy joins me in sending you warmest congratulations on your milestone 70th birthday, and wishing you many more years of good health and happiness with your beloved Vera, children and grandchildren.

With deepest affection,

Yours ever,

Henri

12 July 1990