

12-18-1989

Henri Temianka Correspondence; (lte)

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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, culture, virtuosity in musical performance, violinist, chamber music, camaraderie, press, December 18, 1989

Henri Temianka
2915 Patricia Avenue
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December 18, 1989

Letters to the Editor
Los Angeles Times
Times Mirror Square
Los Angeles, CA 90053

Sir or Madam:

Congratulations to Leon Whiteson for his revealing piece on "pianist Jascha Heifitz" (View, Dec. 17). The existence of this twin brother of the better known violinist Jascha Heifetz has always been a tightly guarded secret. Mr. Whiteson refers to the "comfortable Hawaiian day bed tucked into a corner ... where the pianist napped." The truth is, the pianist had no choice. Because of the intense rivalry between the two brothers, Heifetz the violinist kept Heifitz the pianist chained to the bed, much of the time heavily sedated.

May one hope that Mr. Whiteson who "writes regularly for the View Section...", will continue to regale us with his exciting discoveries and tidbits.

Yours sincerely,



Henri Temianka
(213) 836-2076

HT/ap

bc: Mr. Charles Champlin
Arts Editor

Curtain May Ring Down on Jascha Heifitz Studio

By LEON WHITESON

While sitting in his hilltop studio overlooking the Beverly Hills canyons, pianist Jascha Heifitz could look out the wide windows and imagine he was in Tuscany. The wooded slopes, punctuated by cypresses and the red tile roofs of Mediterranean-style villas, gave the musician a sense of calm.

Heifitz's hexagonal studio, a redwood pavilion with a wood-shake roof, was dedicated to tranquillity. Designed in 1948 to Heifitz's specifications by Lloyd Wright, son of Frank Lloyd Wright, the studio seems to echo four decades of peaceful

harmony that ended with Heifitz's death in December, 1987.

Now, however, the Heifitz studio is threatened with demolition. The property, which includes a main house designed by another architect, recently has been bought by a movie star. The actor, who asked not to be named, intends to tear down the existing buildings and erect a modern mansion on the site.

But the new owner, an architecture buff, has offered to give the studio to anyone willing to pay the cost of moving it to another site. If no person or institution accepts the offer within the new few months, the studio's distinctive architec-

ture and its memories will be lost.

"Fred Hartman, the architect for the new house, told me of his client's offer," said Martin Weil, a prominent local preservation architect. "I immediately contacted the Los Angeles Conservancy, and they agreed to sponsor a search for a new home for the studio."

The conservancy is searching among local institutions, including USC, where Heifitz taught. So far, however, no organization has agreed to fund the studio's move.

Indeed, moving the studio would be costly and complicated, Weil said. Because Gilcrest Drive, the street on which the studio sits, is only 18 feet wide, the

46-foot-by-28-foot stucco structure would have to be sliced into three sections and lifted off its concrete base. A preliminary estimate is \$40,000, which does not include the expense of building another foundation and erecting the studio on a new site.

But the money would be well spent.

The Heifitz studio was designed by Lloyd Wright during the same post-World War II period as the architect's striking Wayfarer's Chapel in Palos Verdes. Both the chapel, set on a cliff overlooking the Pacific, and the studio display Wright's romanticism.

The studio complex is comprised of the

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STUDIO: Location Sought

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music room that housed Heifitz's Steinway, plus an entry, a side office, a small kitchen and a powder room. A covered breezeway, enveloped by a trumpet vine, connects the studio to the main house.

A red brick and sandstone fireplace dominates one side of the music room, flanked by panoramic view windows. Built-in fittings house a desk, bookcases, and storage cabinets for records and sheet music. A television, radio and record player are also built into the studio's walls, which are topped by concealed lighting coves that cast a glow on the green plaster ceiling.

Gouges in the music room's carpeting mark the spot by the window where the Heifitz Steinway once sat. (The piano is now in his daughter's home.) Elsewhere, the room's parquet floor still gleams with the high shine Heifitz insisted on in his organized environment.

A comfortable Hawaiian day bed tucked into a corner was where the pianist napped. Upholstered in green linen to match the ceiling color, the couch illustrates Heifitz's penchant for a bit of luxury to ease the demands of his life.

"Jascha allowed very few visitors into the sanctum of his studio," said Annette Greer, Heifitz's personal secretary for 25 years. "It

WHO TO CALL

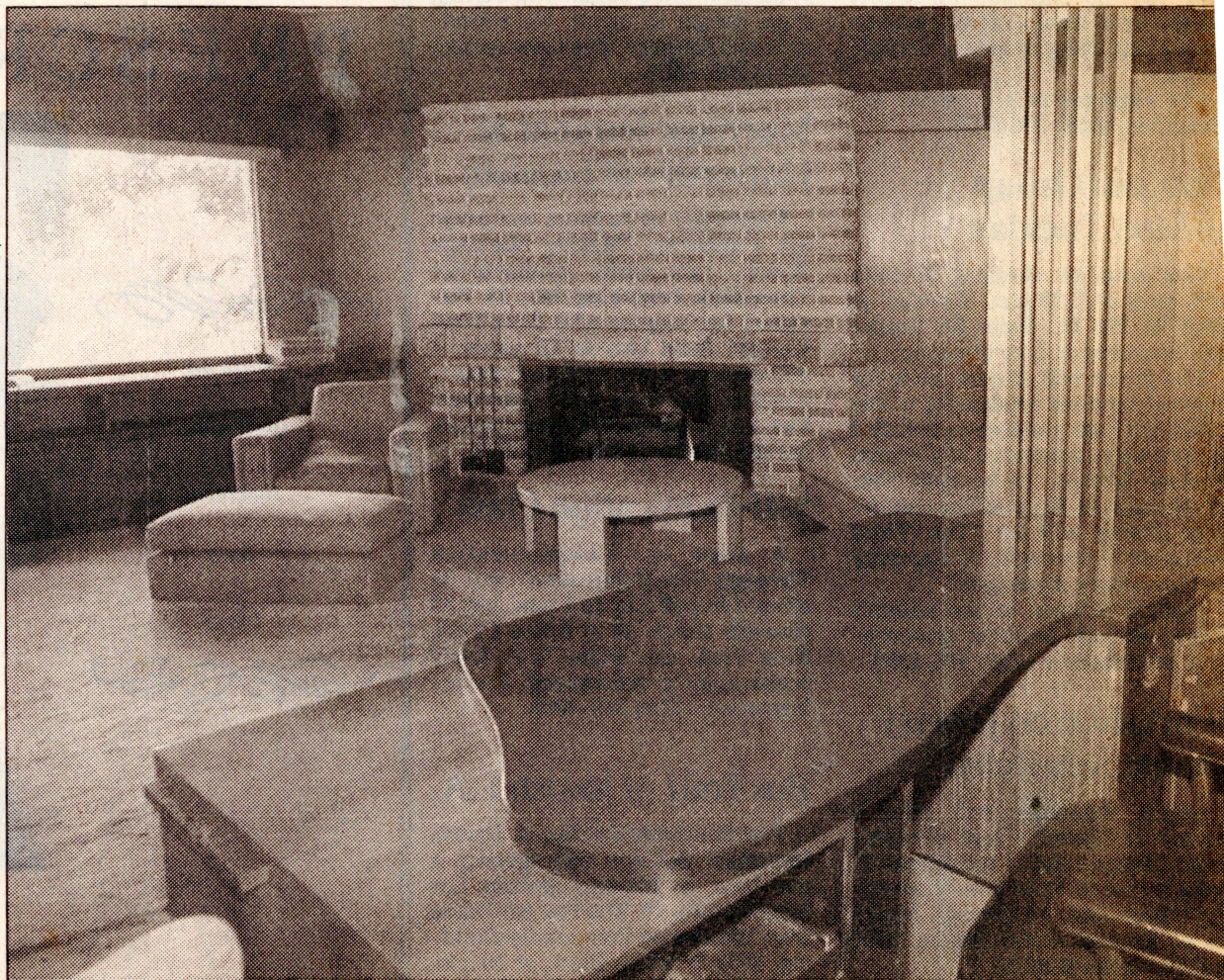
■ Anyone interested in the fate of the Heifitz studio should contact the Los Angeles Conservancy, (213) 623-2489.

was his refuge from the world and its pressures, a quiet place to play music and rest his mind."

If no one comes forward to save Heifitz's sanctuary, there is an alternative to moving the entire studio. Skirball Museum, a local museum dedicated to American Jewish history, is considering salvaging the interior of the music room and reassembling it inside one of its galleries if the moving expenses can be raised.

However, "I feel that the combination of a great musician's memory and a talented architect's design warrants the preservation of the whole studio intact," Martin Weil said. "Surely there is a patron somewhere in the city who cares enough to save this unique piece of Angeleno cultural history?"

Leon Whiteson writes regularly for the View section on architecture and design.



DOUGLAS R. BURROWS / Los Angeles Times

Unless a new location is found for the Heifitz Studio, it will be demolished to make way for a mansion.