
From: President <[REDACTED]>
Sent: Monday, March 25, 2013 12:45 AM
To: Jeffrey Epstein
Subject: Thanks

I am finally home.

First, let me wish you a happy passover; second, thanks for the candor and the friendship. So you won't mind if I push back.

There are, as I can see it, three issues and if each can be addressed, with a third round of checking, you might think differently. I have had Lynne send on names.

1) The repertoire. The works we do are worth doing, sometimes because a masterpiece is unearthed, and sometimes, something good but influential and worth hearing has been revived, and and sometimes as a foil from history against which we measure our so called greatest hits. In all cases, the works have to be performed and experienced and therefore performed. And we have a loyal following in the hall and on the internet. So something is working.

2) The format of the concerts is a curated one that links music with literature, politics, history--a necessary part of what music is. In that sense the ASO is totally unique.

3) Botstein and the ASO. The truth is that I have been such a thorn of the side of critics, conductors and managers that I am not surprised at what you found. But you will find support and real support within the profession. Pardon the expression but I have not gotten medals and awards for anything but my work in music. I just got the Bruckner Medal this month (the other recipients have been Toscanini and Walter, among others). And I got the same Austrian Cross for contributions to music as Sir Simon Rattle--the same year. I hate that stuff, but there it is.

On 1--again think of Nabokov, whose favorite Russian poets were often obscure figures derided by all the other critics. He stood alone. The Marschner is beautiful opera and a crucial link between Beethoven and Wagner. So I stand in the Quixotic defense of works that are worth it--even if they are not as good as others. Music does not follow Darwinian patterns (a longer discussion). It is not science. That is, if I may say so, a commonplace; the idea that history is a judge that seems right but is not. One of the greatest plays was forgotten after the writer died and rediscovered in the 1920s, 100 years later--Woyzeck. That is just one example.

As to 2, that is one way to build an audience, by linking music to other forms of life--to pretentiously paraphrase Wittgenstein.

And to No 3) I am still haunted by early criticisms by angry competitors and idiot ignorant critics who hated my ideas and the fact that I was an outsider with another career in scholarship and education.

That being said, why not give me one last shot at proving the majority wrong. I have been at it for nearly 25 years, and in the next five, if there can be no measured improvement on the execution front--then that will be that. But 120,000 sales and a Grammy nomination for a rare work--a Popov symphony from the 1930s--and more than 20 years of some real success (we have generated a body of new scholarship in music history--is cause enough to inspire you to give us help.

This is my plea. But I am not Moses, and if there were a God, he would not be on my side. (Another reason to help). I greatly cherish this new friendship and I have real admiration for how you go about doing things----tough as it is often I truly enjoy the argument. But this time I and not your preliminary findings and researchers--am right. Given the firestorm I created 20 years ago I am even surprised I did as well in your research, whatever grade you put on the result.

It is not the final exam, only a badly constructed mid-term, I am a bit proud not to have gotten a top grade. True controversy rarely leads to praise in this business. Nabokov became famous and admired only at the end.

Leon

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