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high fidelity

THE MAGAZINE FOR MUSIC LISTENERS

GREAT BARRINGTON • MASSACHUSETTS

March 21, 1961

Mr. Hugh Edwards
The Art Institute of Chicago
Chicago, Illinois

Dear Hugh:

Walter Toscanini sent me a copy of the March "WFMT -- Chicago Fine Arts Guide," and as I was leafing through it this morning I stopped startled on page 7 to see a familiar face. So this is just to say hello and to let you know that I still have fond memories of the times when we used to discuss Helen Morgan and Marcel Proust and listen to your Scarlatti Society records of Wanda Landowska (who later came to be a dear friend and neighbor).

It is comforting to know, in a time when ~~everything~~ seems to change almost hourly, that you are still in Chicago and at the Art Institute and busy at the things that have always interested you. As you can see from this letterhead, I've stuck to my last too. I came to this magazine, where I'm now editor, by way of the New York Sun, the Saturday Review, and a couple of books.

Do you ever hear from our old friend Herbert Burrows? I last saw him in London in 1948.

All the best,



Roland Gelatt

March 23, 1961.

Mr. Roland Gelatt, Editor,
High Fidelity,
Great Barrington,
Massachusetts.

Dear Roland:

For several years it has been my intention to write you but I have always been prevented by the thought that you might not remember me. The fact that you put an end to my hesitations with your letter today has made me very happy.

I have remained very much the same, in the same neighborhood, almost in the same room. Although a little larger, it is still in a hotel and my only domestic companions are a phonograph and many books. You have done so much and I would be proud of your accomplishments, even if I had never known you - you live on the same level with Duke Ellington, Helen Morgan, Jacques d'Amboise, Yelley d'Aranyi, André Eglevsky, Walker Evans, whom I am also proud of having known. Your books and articles have given me much pleasure and satisfaction and you are blessed to be so largely involved with the phonograph, which - with the camera and even more so - is one of the two gifts most worthy of his spirit that man has given to the world in his later days. There is so much to say to you! High Fidelity itself is enough to provoke a volume. In its beginning I read each number again and again and was a subscriber for three years. Reading about Ampex, H. H. Scott, Mackintosh et al creations has become a latter day development of what it used to be to savor the reports of the lives and accomplishments of all those dreamed about performers in whose time you did not live. I am ashamed to confess I have none of these modern substitutes for jewelry, but the rather bourgeois product I do possess doesn't offend me and I am hard to please. For long periods I stray away among people who drive me back to the phonograph. In time it returns me to people. I drifted away from High Fidelity for no reason that could be attributed to the magazine. Almost every evening for two years - to escape the irritations of our new vulgarized "good taste" and to see people the sociologists misunderstand - I frequented a big skating rink in Harvey, Illinois. My only companion was a Rolleiflex which made the children of highly paid truck drivers and steel workers with their American faces framed by duck wings and quasi-Renaissance colored shirts from Penney's, look like a whole line of princes by Bronsino. It was the Elvis period. When I found the photographs by Robert Frank about a year and a half ago, I realized he did all this much better than I could hope to do; ~~so~~ I was satisfied and have gone back to the phonograph. So I am sure High Fidelity is on the way.

I wish I could go on and on with this letter. I am afraid you will hear again because I feel you are responsible for much that gives me my best pleasures. Every good wish to you and I look forward to seeing you again someday. I have also wondered about Herbert Burrows. Where is he and how did I lose all trace of him? Well, Proust said we see everyone again before we die.

Sincerely,