

## Re: correspondence from well-known composers

No personal computers then, of course.

Since even typewriters could be scarce, or time-consuming to use, most folks wrote letters in longhand.

And they took time to write well, to communicate, because...well, because that was the way of the world then: slower, more considered, more personable, more respectful.

Somehow that makes these letters seem more valuable now.

They embody their times AND their authors - each a great artist in his own way.

The letters from **Karel Husa** came years after I'd finished at Cornell, when I was trying to generate a career / promote my music.

You can feel his kindness and caring in the letters - and that's what I valued so much about him.

He truly believed in me, believed that my future was in composing and teaching, and went out of his way to find me my first (and only!) teaching job.

An old-school European gentleman - escaped his native Prague just before the Russian invasion of 1968 - sophisticated, yet down-to-earth, and humble.

His music combined substance with flash in an unfailingly engaging, balanced way.

Even though he was a Pulitzer-Prize winner, I think he, like George Rochberg, is now underappreciated.

DEPARTMENT OF MUSIC  
CORNELL UNIVERSITY

LINCOLN HALL

ITHACA, N. Y. 14853-4101

Dear Jack:

Forgive this typing(my own) with mistakes,but if I do not write today,  
I am afraid,it will be sometime before it is typed officially and then *I would have*  
~~to~~ come back to sign it.

Thank you for your letter and score with tape;I do remember you very well,  
although you studied more with Mr.Palmer,your main subject-composition.  
I also understand your worries about the performance-or lack of it,of  
your orchestral music.I have always mentioned to my students to learn how  
to conduct,even if a little,their own music.It helps especially in the  
beginnings.But even then,it is very hard to get performances of orchetsral  
music.A young composer,unless incredibly lucky,gets to be known better by  
writing for a chorus or wind ensemble,esp.the latter.Orchestras have so much  
music and they are not as interested in the new and newest.Yet,there are  
lucky exeptions.One can say though,that one or two performances of someones  
music will make that person famous.Composing is a process of many and many  
years(it is like some gets to conduct twice a major orchestra;it is good,  
but many years will prove later how good one is).

Perhaps now with the emerging of young composers "in residence" with orchestras,  
the living composers will be better served,esp.the young ones.Even if speacial  
concerts are created(of contemporary music for inst.) it will help.And hopefully  
another generation of listeners will be emerging from these experiments.

I hope that Ms Comet can play your piece.I will mention it to some people,  
and meantime,if you wish,I can leave it in the Cornell Library,sothat it is  
available and rather in safer place,for I do not know whre even my own scores  
are at this moment.I do not know if you have joined the ACA(American Composers  
Alliance)it may be good to have the scores with them(write to BMI).

I am still writing and teaching(at Cornell) and traveling,but it is getting  
a little too much, and I feel I have to slow down,as it is also a matter of  
health.

With best wishes

Sincerely



Karel Husa

Mr.Jack Gray  
5120 West Gelding Dr  
Glendale AZ 85306

P.S.Another way of being able to get performances is to write for small  
groups(chamber), or solos for friends,as they can perform them;most of  
the composers got known through the chamber and solo music first.KH.

Karel Husa  
1032 Hanshaw Road  
Ithaca, New York 14850

May 21 '92

Dear Jack:

Many thanks for your letter! I didn't know you even considered to come, I understand Mr Sokol wanted to make known to our graduates of my retirement.

I understand perfectly, thank you for writing me, I was glad to hear you are fine - many best wishes

in words

Karel Husa