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2015-01-01

### Letter, 1975, from Robert Russell Bennett to Eva Jessye

Robert Russell Bennett

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#### Recommended Citation

Bennett, Robert Russell, "Letter, 1975, from Robert Russell Bennett to Eva Jessye" (2015). *Eva Jessye Correspondence*. 125.

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DEAR EVA:

MANY YEARS AGO MRS. WINIFRED EDGERTON MERRILL BECAME THE FIRST WOMAN PHD. AT COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY. SHE SPECIALIZED IN MATHEMATICAL ASTRONOMY. IN THE COURSE OF HER STUDIES SHE DISCOVERED THAT ANY CURVE, LINE OR POINT COULD BE EXPRESSED MATHEMATICALLY BY CO-ORDINATES, OR REFERENCE AXES. SHE APPLIED THE DISCOVERY TO HANDWRITING, AND BROUGHT TO ME SOME WRITING DONE ON A MUSIC STAFF, AFTER HAVING SHOWN WHERE THE POINTS WERE THAT WOULD EXPRESS EVERY STROKE OF THE WRITING MATHEMATICALLY. THESE POINTS ON THE STAFF MADE A MELODIC LINE, AND MY JOB WAS TO FIND RHYTHMS, HARMONIES AND MUSICAL PHRASES THAT WERE MORE OR LESS DICTATED BY THE POINTS. WE FOUND THAT A GREAT DEAL ABOUT THE PERSON WHO SIGNED HIS NAME ON THE STAFF CAME OUT IN THE MUSIC..HIS CHARACTER, MOOD AND PERSONALITY.

WE DID MANY SIGNATURES, AND A BOOK WAS PUBLISHED WITH THE 'MUSICAL AUTOGRAMS' OF TWENTY FAMOUS MEN. IN FACT, THE WHOLE PROCESS WAS PATENTED AT THAT TIME.

I DREW A STAFF THROUGH YOUR SIGNATURE ON A NEWSPAPER PAGE YOU SENT ME, AND HERE IS THE MUSIC YOU WROTE, TOGETHER WITH MY IMPRESSION OF THE PIECE. WITH MY COMPLIMENTS..

LOVE AND GREETINGS TO YOU

(signed) RUSSELL.

(Robert Russell Bennett)  
1975