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Letter, 1966 February 18, from Robert Russel Bennett to Eva Jessye

Robert Russell Bennett

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140 East 56th Street
New York 22

February 18, 1966

Miss Eva Jessye
Box 96
Diamond, Missouri

Dear Eva;

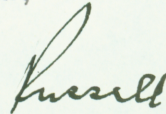
You will probably get a message sooner or later from one of the elevator men in the RCA Building who knows you and me both very well. I told him that the last letter I sent to you was returned to me and I am now delighted to have an address for you. It is interesting to see that you are in my home state.

Answering your question as to what I did with Gershwin, I helped to raise him, musically. I began arranging for him almost as soon as he began writing tunes. I had great ambition for him with his brilliant talent and was never fully happy over what he did with it. However, he certainly had a style of his own put together from many of his contacts and experiences and only needed a little more cultural breadth to be one of the great figures in music. This is rather a snobbish thing for me to say but the possibilities of the man were unlimited and he was making great progress with musical techniques and orchestration. Porgy and Bess was undoubtedly the highest spot in his career.

As far as your work being a "marvelous addition to the literature of the theater", this is undoubtedly a mild statement from the standpoint of the theater. I was thinking in terms of something far beyond the American Theater when we used to see each other a great deal.

I wish you all success as always and am always glad to hear of your activities.

My very best to you,



Robert Russell Bennett

RRB:rek

* George and I.