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Letter, 1966 February 26, from Robert Russell Bennett to Eva Jessye

Robert Russell Bennett

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140 East 56th Street
New York 22

February 26, 1966

Miss Eva Jessye
Box 96
Diamond, Missouri

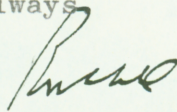
Dear Eva;

My remarks about my personal contact with George Gershwin were personal from me to you, and if you wish to go into the great big world with my opinion I submit the following:

George Gershwin, a nice man and a nice friend, was always hard for me to place in my general estimate of great musicians. He was always either oversold or undersold. Oversold by the great mass of listeners who simply accepted him as another source of entertainment for them and undersold by the dedicated students of music, many of whom would not admit he offered them any musical progress at all. As we walked and rode and worked together I concluded that his great asset, second only to his fantastic instinct for agreeable sounding music, was his sensitivity to everything he saw or heard which he absorbed and made a part of his creative equipment without knowing he was doing so. He loved music, he loved his own music and he loved to play the piano. You've no doubt already heard the answer of Oscar Levant when asked if George's music would be played a hundred years from then and he said "It will be if George is alive."

I hope this will be of some use for you in your forthcoming book.

Lots of good wishes as always



Robert Russell Bennett

RRB:rek