

Appendix 15

To and From Max Pirani - Letter of advice

Dear Mr. Pirani

Many years have gone by since you more or less willed me through the L.R.A.M. the fact you may have to puzzle your brow to remember who I am. I have often been into RAM to enquire if you were home again and a few months ago I wrote to the Secretary to ask the same question and he sent me your address. I am writing mainly in a way to ask your advice. I wish now I had taken it six years ago, but since then there been no war, I probably now have been the famous stage star! However, life has moved a pace and in the six years I have married, gained a son, lost my brother and my husband, yet still gained much which to study. You see I don't want to just earn a living for us both, I want a profession. Something I can put my heart into so that my life is not just entirely centred round the boy, that would be bad both for him and myself. Naturally I want to do the best I can for him and if I could do it through my music, I think it might make us both happy and perhaps even others as well. I should like to study with you again if only you would come back to England. But now I have written enough. Do please write to me your genuine opinion and advise. If there is the smallest chance for me I am willing to take because I really believe in heart that I could do it.

Do remember me to your wife and family. They must be nearly grown up by now.

Yours very sincerely Joanna Guise (Dibdin)

slightest idea what the

experience. My music has sadly deteriorated, though only outside – inside it is still there perhaps more strongly than ever. And now I would like your advice. Would there be any hope for me on the concert platform? You remember my work and I believe you had some hope for me then. Of course, it would need a lot of hard study to get back to where I was in 1939 and then improved from there.

If I am to give young Raoul a worthwhile education I shall have to improve my financial position though until he goes to school, I think we can manage without earning. He was only two in March this year so have perhaps three years in

Letter from Max Pirani to Joan

UNIVERSITY OF WESTERN ONTARIO LONDON -CANADA
MUSIC TEACHERS' COLLEGE
MAX PIRANI, HON. R.A.M. DIRECTOR
August 26th, 1945

My dear Joanna,

Of course I remember you and all your doings at the R.A.M. I am terribly sorry to hear that you lost your brother in the war, and for your sake that you had such a short and tragic married life. The problem of your son, and what to do with him, is one that must be only too frequent now and in the days to come. It is only natural that you want to do everything that you can for him, without letting the care of him in the future swamp you completely.

It is not an easy question which you ask me; during the past six years, conditions have undoubtedly changed in England as they have elsewhere, and I have not the possibilities of a performing pianist's career will be by the time you have prepared yourself for it. It is true that when you were at

the R.A.M. I thought that you had in you real talent far piano playing, but I don't think that you were ever single-hearted about it. One thing you must realize; that to be an artist of any stature requires an over-riding determination, and that if you contemplate taking such a prospect seriously, you must be prepared to sacrifice most things. It has never been an easy thing to make a living in England with concert work alone and I have no information from you as to whether you would want to teach, as an additional source of income.

If your financial state warrants it I think you would find it worthwhile to have a shot at learning to play the piano really well, but whether you will eventually reach a position which would enable you to support yourself and provide for Raoul's education well, that is too much of a prophesy for me to make after this time and at this distance. I would find it difficult enough if you came in person and played for me!

My work here in Canada has been tremendously varied, and I have no concrete plans for the future myself. My new Teachers College is just getting under way, and if it proves a success, I shall certainly stay over here for another two years at least. So I shan't be back in England to advise or to teach you, doing both of which would give me great pleasure. My family is growing up; Felix is 17, in third year University and a gifted boy in a profession which will assure his future; he is training as a physicist. Gina is eleven, and enjoys life as a Canadian child; she may find it hard to adapt herself to English ways when she returns.

My wife is getting a little tired of professional activities, but we have reformed the Pirani Trio with a new 'cellist, and the new interest may stimulate her; I hope so.

Do let me know what you decide to do. I am happy to think that my old R.A.M. students still remember me, and if a word from

me can be of the slightest value, it is always available the slightest value it is always available

My very best greetings Yours ever sincerely, Max Pirani

By 1948 I was aware of Joan playing the piano for a considerable amount of time. She was obvious determined to pass her exams and at least be able to function as a fully qualified Piano Teacher. I was obvious unaware of the struggle it must have been and the determination she had to succeed.

The following letter in an indication yet again of how Joan fought her corner.

Letter from Sept 1948 regarding Music Tuition.

Dear Mr. Foggin

When you phoned me a few weeks ago I was still a little undecided as to whether or not I should continue studying with you.

I have thought a lot about our conversation at my last lesson, and I feel that although you may be right, I am not ready to give up hope entirely, but to continue without your confidence in me would leave to inevitable defeat. Therefore I decided to see Mr. Pirani in order to have his opinion and he has agreed to accept me provisionally. I am very grateful to you for the help you have given me in the past year and I am sorry it cannot continue yours sincerely

We note the arrogant response from Mr Foggin.

Max Pirani who did take on the further teaching and there is in the archive a card of congratulation from he to Joan who past all her exams by 1950 .

