

Letter by Natalie Curtis to Ferruccio Busoni (San Diego, 19 September 1913)

address: Foster San Diego Co. 900 Juniper Street California.

Sept 19th 1913

My dear friend and Master;

you have given me much happiness in the news of your new composition and in your thought of me. I accept your dedication with much appreciation and am eagerly looking forward to knowing the work, which I feel sure will mean an enlarging of our artistic horizon.

Have you found time amid the fulness of your art-life, to experiment further with the smaller intervals (the proposed division of our arbitrary tonal system) and the new harmonic combinations that might result therefrom? Your wonderful little book so clearly pointed the way forward a new growth in music along those lines, that I hope you may live long enough, dear Master, to make practical some of those ideas. Such a task needs the clear logical mind of the scientist as well as the prophetic vision of the artist, and no doubt something of the philosopher – a modern Pythagoras – and it seems to me that you have just this unusual combination of gifts.

I am quite out of the world in our new West and so not know what has been going on in Europe excepting as my friends keep me advised. Were you satisfied with your opera? – I shared like so much to know! – Before I left New York I went to hear you play again chez Welte-Mignon and was impressed anew with the wonder that you earned have achieved such complete supremacy as a performer and yet have done so much else besides. And you are not much a very old man, either! – Yours is indeed a full, rich and useful life – may it be a long one.

When may I hope to know some of the new work? Will it all be written so that our pianistic olympians can perform it, or will there be a few simple laws that poor humble mortals like me, can play? – I am full of anticipation and expectancy.

Please give my bow to your wife, and believe me as always your grateful and affectionate pupil,

Natalie Curtis.