

Letter by Natalie Curtis to Ferruccio Busoni (New York, 2 July 1915)

July 2nd
1915 Wave Crest
Far Rockaway
New York.

Dear friend & master. –

I congratulate you indeed on such a large achievement. It seems to me miraculous to have accomplished so much in so short a time. The well-tempered clavichord alone is in itself a master fulfillment of highest value. How proud your wife must be!

Perhaps your exile is a "blessing in disguise", as we say – (certainly well-disguised. For, it is true –!) It will bear much fruit for the world of art which is being so savagely denuded of its treasures in these days – so many artists killed, wounded, so much wiped out in this universal sacrifice of human energy.

Now, – can you not "forget war & exile" in company with the Curtis family, if you cured fear yourself away from such absorbing & valuable work for a few short hours?

Could not you & your wife come down here to the sea (40 minutes, from the Pennsylvania station –) some afternoon, & have a quiet family meal with us? There are returning trains in the evening at nearly every hour – I would meet you at the station, of course. Perhaps the boys would like to come too, and have a swim in the sea? – You know we are very simple folk, & we cant give you an elaborate, Parisian repast of the Byrue – Beaux-Arts type, such as I enjoyed with you – [when, by the way, you asked Mr Byrue if his very expensive guinea-hen was pork!!] which I have never forgotten –] But we can give you more chicken than ham, & more ham than chicken, and certainly a very warm welcome.

I shall be in New York one day next week, & will telephone your wife to see if & when you could come. Of course, if you can not leave your work, then I shall under stand – for indeed that is the important thing & must not be interrupted. With my love to your wife, and best wishes for all the new compositions (which Keen & I look forward to heaving, so may Klien!)

Your faithful
friend

Natalie Curtis