

Letter from Leopold Godowsky to Isidore Philipp, original at the Philipp Archives of the University of Louisville, Kentucky.

Berlin, Dec.22, 1930
Hafenplatz 7.

Dearest, Good and Kind Friend:

I would have answered your much too kind letter as soon as I received it, but I have been in a frightful state of mind and in a poor condition physically. It is still very difficult for me to walk, play or write. I continue to suffer from insomnia. You, dear and poor friend, know how terrible it is to pass sleepless nights, brooding over one's misfortunes and the nothingness and aimlessness of our sad life. I was always predisposed to introspection and melancholia. My illness aggravated my depression and the longer it lasts the more it gets a firm hold upon me. I think too much cosmically and metaphysically. Our earthly things seem so insignificant, stupid and inconsequential.

Your last letter brought tears to my eyes. You called my nature and my music noble. What are you then? I have never met such a wholly good man; such a kind, sweet, tolerant, understanding and really noble nature as you are. This is not flattery, but my genuine conviction. I love you more than any I have ever met, and my respect and admiration know no bounds. That I and my efforts should make such a favourable impression on you renders me proud in the limited sense of pride that my philosophy allows. I feel myself insignificant and my work as thing that will pass into oblivion before it will have the opportunity to become known. Who am I, when Bach, who was forgotten by the world sixty-five years, had to be resurrected by Schumann and Mendelssohn? Such a mighty genius forgotten. And a time will come when all that is on earth will vanish and no trace left. How can any thinking human being have the slightest conceit?

My plans are undecided yet. Mrs Godowsky and I will stay at Mrs Landerker's, Hafenplatz 7, Berlin, till after the New Year. We expect to go to Vienna the first week in January for not more than several days. From Vienna we hope to go to Paris and from there to the Riviera. I must go to New York, as soon as my health is better. My illness cost me a great deal of money. As you know, I lost practically everything last year. I therefore must do something as soon as I can work. I have not had any material worries since thirty-eight years. I was never rich nor was I poor since my young days.

I must close this letter by wishing you and your kind and charming sister a pleasant Christmas and happy and prosperous New Year and many of them.

Your devoted friend,
GODOWSKY