

Withdrawal/Redaction Sheet

Clinton Library

DOCUMENT NO. AND TYPE	SUBJECT/TITLE	DATE	RESTRICTION
001. draft	Phone Nos. (Partial) (2 pages)	n.d.	P6/b(6)

COLLECTION:

Clinton Presidential Records
First Lady's Office
Speechwriting
OA/Box Number: 8169

FOLDER TITLE:

Yeltsin State Visit---Van Cliburn Remarks 9-28

2012-1004-S

ms525

RESTRICTION CODES

Presidential Records Act - [44 U.S.C. 2204(a)]

- P1 National Security Classified Information [(a)(1) of the PRA]
- P2 Relating to the appointment to Federal office [(a)(2) of the PRA]
- P3 Release would violate a Federal statute [(a)(3) of the PRA]
- P4 Release would disclose trade secrets or confidential commercial or financial information [(a)(4) of the PRA]
- P5 Release would disclose confidential advice between the President and his advisors, or between such advisors [(a)(5) of the PRA]
- P6 Release would constitute a clearly unwarranted invasion of personal privacy [(a)(6) of the PRA]

C. Closed in accordance with restrictions contained in donor's deed of gift.

PRM. Personal record misfile defined in accordance with 44 U.S.C. 2201(3).

RR. Document will be reviewed upon request.

Freedom of Information Act - [5 U.S.C. 552(b)]

- b(1) National security classified information [(b)(1) of the FOIA]
- b(2) Release would disclose internal personnel rules and practices of an agency [(b)(2) of the FOIA]
- b(3) Release would violate a Federal statute [(b)(3) of the FOIA]
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- b(7) Release would disclose information compiled for law enforcement purposes [(b)(7) of the FOIA]
- b(8) Release would disclose information concerning the regulation of financial institutions [(b)(8) of the FOIA]
- b(9) Release would disclose geological or geophysical information concerning wells [(b)(9) of the FOIA]

FIRST LADY HILLARY RODHAM CLINTON
RECEPTION FOR VAN CLIBURN
GEORGE WASHINGTON UNIVERSITY
SEPTEMBER 28, 1994

TALKING POINTS

Acknowledgements: Hosts--Steven Trachtenberg, President of George Washington Univ, and James Millar [mil-LAHR], Dean of the GW Elliot School of International Affairs; distinguished guests--Van Cliburn; Mrs. Yeltsin; Evgeny Sidorov [yev-GAINEE SID-uh-rov]; Russian Minister of Culture, and Dwayne Andreas, Chairman & CEO of Archer Daniels Midland Company.

In 1958, when a young Texan won the International Tchaikovsky Piano Competition in Moscow, he became a cultural link whose artistic talent would continue, for the rest of the century, to bring East and West together. Indeed, throughout his magnificent career, Van Cliburn has proven that music is a universal language that transcends geography and politics.

Beloved in Russia, in the U.S., and around the world, Van Cliburn is a treasure that people of all nations can share. A brilliant pianist and an ambassador of goodwill, this extraordinary man has shown us that each of us can make a contribution to humanity in our own special way. And he has shown us the the greatest tool of diplomacy is often the simple magic of music and the shared emotions and expressions that the musician conveys.

We can all appreciate now -- more than three decades later -- the impact of his performance in Moscow in 1958. Thanks to his music, a door was opened between two nations that at the time regarded each other very warily.

On behalf of all lovers of music, on behalf of all Americans, and on behalf of our distinguished guests from Russia, we thank you for your humanity and we salute you for making our lives and our world so much richer.

###

FIRST LADY HILLARY RODHAM CLINTON
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###

Kathy: Van Cliburn Reception location
for First Lady & Mrs. Yeltsin

place: George Wash University
Marin Center

time: 5:30pm tomorrow

1st Lady's Press Office 6-2960

See Satterfield 62920

FIRST LADY HILLARY RODHAM CLINTON
RECEPTION FOR VAN CLIBURN ~~WITH MRS. VELTSIN~~
LOCATION:
SEPTEMBER 28, 1994

TALKING POINTS

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That

conveys

For you

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lovers of music, and on behalf of our
distinguished guests from Russia, we ^{Thank you for your humanity} salute you
for making our lives and our world
so much ~~better~~ richer.

(7) We can all appreciate now - ^{more than} ~~ready~~ Three decades
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DRAFT

VAN CLIBURN

[001]

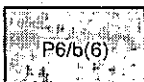
Van Cliburn

As you know, Van Cliburn is one of the greatest classical pianists of the 20th century. He became an American cultural icon at the age of 23 when he won the first Tchaikovsky Competition in Moscow at the height of the Cold War. His victory at the competition in 1958 made Cliburn a world hero – an estimated 17 million Russians watched his performances and a photo of Premier Krushchev embracing Cliburn appeared in papers everywhere. At the time of Sputnik, Van Cliburn's music provided a brief thaw in American-Russian relations, and helped open a cultural door between the two nations.

For many Russians, Van Cliburn was the first American they had ever seen, and he is still known today as the "best-known American musician in Russia." When he returned home from the competition, Cliburn was welcomed by President Eisenhower and an estimated 100,000 people turned out for a Manhattan ticker tape parade honoring his triumph in Moscow.

Cliburn had a 20-year performing career following the competition but retired in 1978, rarely performing in public since. He returned to the public stage briefly in 1987, when he performed at a White House state dinner for President Reagan and Mikhail Gorbachev. In May, Cliburn ended his 16-year from performing and announced a 20-city tour of the U.S. with the Moscow Philharmonic, the orchestra that had accompanied him in the finals of the Tchaikovsky competition in 1958. The tour, which has been touted as an historic return, recieved mixed reviews... Cliburn interrupted the tour in August when his mother, who was his piano teacher until he was 17, died.

Cliburn awards –



Mike Friedman

"A Celebration of Van Cliburn"

The American-Russian Cultural Cooperation Foundation is sponsoring "A Celebration of Van Cliburn," a gala and concert at Lisner Auditorium honoring Van Cliburn for his contribution to American-Russian cultural exchange. President Clinton and President Yeltsin are the honorary co-chairs of the event. Although Cliburn will not perform at the event, a group of prominent Russian and American prominent classical musiThe event will include a concert honoring Cliburn by prominent classical musicians, and a tribute to Cliburn narrated by Walter Cronkite. Roberta Peters, Red Star

Cliburn is not performing – he is the guest of honor.

Before the concert, there is a private reception...

Pre-concert reception -- sponsored by the GW university -- Steven Trachtenberg;
 Dean of Elliot School of Intl Affairs are the co-hosts James Millar
 250 people -- Walter Cronkite; Roberta Peters; Joseph Duffy, Pres. of USIA; Former
 Senator James Simontea; J.W. Marriott; VIP reception; people paid GW's guests;
 acknowledge: T and Millar; Russian Minister of Culture -- "Evgeny Sidorov"
 Dwayne Andreas Van Cliburn (Alexander Ptomkin -- P6/b(6))
 performance and then gala dinner --

Ack

- Steven Trachtenberg (Pres of GW)
 - James Millar (Emil-LAHR) Dean of
the GW Elliot
School of Int'l
Affairs
 - Van Cliburn
 - Mrs. Yeltsin
 - Evgeny Sidorov, Russian Min. of
Culture
 - Dwayne Andreas, ? Chairman & Chief Executive
Officer of Archer Daniels
Midland Co.
- Yev gheny

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**FIRST LADY HILLARY RODHAM CLINTON
RECEPTION FOR VAN CLIBURN WITH MRS. YELTSIN
LOCATION
SEPTEMBER 28, 1994**

TALKING POINTS

In 1958, when a young Texan won the International Tchaikovsky Piano Competition in Moscow, he became a cultural link whose artistic talent would continue, for the rest of the century, to bring East and West together. Indeed, throughout his magnificent career, Van Cliburn has proven that music is a universal language that transcends geography and politics.

Beloved in Russia and in the U.S., Mr. Cliburn is a treasure that people of all nations can share. A brilliant pianist and an ambassador of goodwill, this extraordinary man has shown us that each one of us can make a contribution to humanity in our own special ways. And he has shown us the greatest tool of politics and diplomacy is often the simple magic of music and the shared emotions and expressions that the musician evokes.

FIRST LADY HILLARY RODHAM CLINTON
RECEPTION FOR VAN CLIBURN WITH ~~MRS. VELTSIN~~

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~~LOCATION~~ ~~De la~~ ? Art 63 -
SEPTEMBER 28, 1994 while there?

TALKING POINTS

Acknowledgements:

link artistic
~~Language, geography, and systems of government separate nations but, music is universal. And sometimes, music can even bridge those differences. In 1958, when a young Texan won the International Tchaikovsky Piano Competition in Moscow, he became a kind of cultural liaison whose talents would continue, for the rest of the century, to bring East and West together.~~

treasure
~~Beloved in the former Soviet Union and in the U.S., Van Cliburn has been a cultural icon shared by both states. And Mr. Cliburn is no stranger to these functions. In 1987, Mr. Cliburn was a guest of the Reagan's at the Gorbachev State Dinner.~~

this extra
A brilliant pianist and an ambassador of goodwill, ~~Mr. Cliburn~~ has shown us that each one of us can make a contribution to humanity in our own special ways. That politics and diplomacy can often fall short of the magic of/in art, emotion, and the spirit.

after the greatest tool
then
politics + diplomacy is the simple
magic of music and - and the
~~art~~

shared emotions
+ expressions that
~~our~~ the
missionary
evokes.

Linda,

Here are the Van Cliburn
remarks. I'm open to edits, of
course.

Kathy

*Indeed, this year
Dwyer that music
is a universal
language that
transcends
geography &
politics.*

18TH STORY of Level 1 printed in FULL format.

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The New York Times

March 3, 1994, Thursday, Late Edition - Final

SECTION: Section C; Page 1; Column 2; Home Desk

LENGTH: 1339 words

HEADLINE: AT HOME WITH VAN CLIBURN;
A Little Night Music

BYLINE: By DONNA PERLMUTTER

DATELINE: FORT WORTH

BODY:

"WELCOME to my little house," Van Cliburn says. "In Texas we always use that adjective because surely someone else will have a bigger house."

As he often does, he is playing host to a late-night gathering of friends and musicians.

"Fads don't interest me," says Mr. Cliburn, who has a predilection for suits and ties (both always navy), for old-fashioned chivalry and for fresh-cut flowers in his sprawling three-story Tudor mansion in Fort Worth. "I belong to the 19th century, a time that celebrated beauty. That -- thanks to my parents and, through them, the music -- is where my roots are."

Upstairs, his 97-year-old mother, Rildia Bee Cliburn (the first name is pronounced RILL-dah), has retired for the evening. An accomplished pianist herself, she was her son's only piano teacher until he went to the Juilliard School at 17, and she has never ceased to be the most significant person in her only child's life.

Mr. Cliburn's guests include the Russian pianist Yevgeny Kissin, who has just played a recital sponsored by Cliburn Concerts, which produces performances by noted musicians at Texas Christian University. The tall Texan with the courtly Southern manners raises his champagne glass, waxing effusive about the performance and cuing the others to join in the toast: Mr. Kissin's mother and teacher, who travel with him, and Mr. Cliburn's close friends and associates Susan Tilley and Tom Smith.

It is midnight. Goodbyes are another five hours away. Only when his mother is particularly tired does she not join him. At 59, the pianist -- who started performing in public again on a limited basis five years ago after an 11-year "intermission," as he calls it -- still follows the nighttime regimen he began as a student in New York. Now, he has converted friends (and anyone who wants to visit him) to his sleep-a-day world.

In 1958, Mr. Cliburn won the gold medal in the first Tchaikovsky competition in Moscow and became the first classical musician whose record sales and fan clubs put him on a par with Johnny Mathis and even Elvis Presley. His success came against the backdrop of the cold war and made him a national hero.

The New York Times, March 3, 1994

That image persists: Van Cliburn waving, amid ticker tape and marching bands, from an open car slowly making its way down Broadway.

When he withdrew from performing publicly in 1978, speculation abounded. Was it touring fatigue? Repertory burnout? Mr. Cliburn, unfailingly courteous and certainly gregarious, is quite willing to talk about why he left the stage, as he has before, but first things first: the house.

Mr. Cliburn, whose warm baritone is still colored by a faint drawl, takes his visitors through the first floor: an immense kitchen, its counters cluttered with clear plastic boxes containing single servings of food; a solarium, a library, a dining room, and a living room the size of a hotel lobby, with a sea of sofas, antique chairs and giant formal arrangements of roses.

Nine Steinway grands are stationed throughout the house. Framed photographs are everywhere: Rildia Bee and Van. Van and Rildia Bee. His eyes adoring, her soft face tilted toward him and smiling. Others photos include those of Mr. Cliburn and Maria Callas, Mr. Cliburn and Sol Hurok, Mr. Cliburn and Nikita S. Khrushchev, Mr. Cliburn and the Ronald Reagans. One long table is crowded with easily a hundred photographs.

There are also old birthday decorations left hanging and a spun-sugar flower sculpture removed from a cake and preserved, Havisham-like, under glass. End of tour.

Mr. Cliburn lavishes money everywhere: on his namesake competition and other music organizations and on schools and conservatories at which he has established scholarships. His holdings continue to grow, largely through what he calls his "real estate exchanges." After that come his record sales (the latest release is an RCA CD of his earlier recordings of the Rachmaninoff Piano Concerto No. 2 and the Beethoven "Emperor" Concerto). And finally, the latest round of performances, which fetch around \$125,000 each in arenas like Grant Park in Chicago, where he is to perform on June 18.

After all, Mr. Cliburn says, "I always had planned to return," and it was an invitation from President Reagan to play for President Mikhail S. Gorbachev at the White House in 1987 that started to crystallize those plans.

At his comeback performance in Philadelphia in 1989, Donal Henahan wrote in The New York Times: "We must be grateful that we have among us a living, breathing virtuoso who may still have something to offer in his mature years. It is reassuring at any rate to know after all these silent years that he is not deficient in the mysterious impulses that keep gifted artists active after the fires of youth burn low. For how long and to what purpose we cannot know, but Van Cliburn is back."

While most musicians may keep a wary eye out for their rivals, Mr. Cliburn seems to revel in good music-making, no matter whose it is.

"I'm a great audience," he says.

Earlier on this particular evening he had sat in the auditorium at Texas Christian listening to Mr. Kissin. From time to time his left hand, fingers tensely splayed, would grasp his knee in a kind of kinetic response. After the third in a group of four of Liszt's "Transcendental Etudes," he broke

tradition, clapping and roaring his approval before the final etude.

It turns out that Mr. Cliburn had once tried to prepare that same difficult etude, but he was never satisfied with his playing. Hearing Mr. Kissin's rendition of it inspired his spontaneous and very vocal glee.

"For me to sit back and experience that kind of artistry," he says, in part explaining how he could take a sabbatical from his career, "is to luxuriate in the music in ways impossible when you're the performer. As a child, my parents insisted I learn how to serve the table. 'You cannot appreciate being served unless you know how to do it yourself,' they would tell me.

"Well, that's what my appreciation was all about -- this fabulous virtuoso serving me, allowing me to bathe in the musical illusions he had taken such pains to create. Mother and Dad used to tell me not to waste a fingernail on jealousy. To enjoy, instead, all that others can offer and look deep in myself for what is unique there. Not be influenced by what is popular."

Certainly, interrupting his career was not a popular move. In 1974, after the death of his father, a director of Rildia Bee Cliburn's family oil business, he stopped accepting new bookings. Within four years, his retirement was accomplished.

"It was the most natural thing in the world for me to do," he now says, deftly holding a cigarette behind his back. "I didn't need to be in public view as a reason for being. There's so much living to do and so many places my heart ached to be besides the stage."

After 20 years of touring, he and his mother initially lived in 14 rooms at the Salisbury Hotel on West 57th Street in New York. But finally, in 1987, they returned to Texas. Mr. Cliburn bought the Tudor mansion and its 18 acres in Fort Worth, "where so many of our friends, so many heart attachments are," he says. He adds: "You cannot know how good it feels to be like other people and say, 'Yes, I can be there for dinner.' And to know that turnip greens and pot roast are just around the corner."

He seems almost suspended in a state of boyish buoyancy and bonhomie. "I do everything from the heart," he says, "from personal conviction. If you try to find love by charting a course, you'll never find it. Everyone at Juilliard scoffed when I chose to play unfashionable Liszt or even Tchaikovsky and Rachmaninoff. And you can't imagine how they teased and ridiculed me for always beginning a performance with the national anthem."

He continues to play the national anthem at all of his performances. And he remembers his parents' advice: "Forget about everything you've left at home when you're somewhere else, and enjoy what's there. Just remember how to get home."

GRAPHIC: Photos: "I belong to the 19th century," Van Cliburn says. (Peter Poulides for The New York Times) (pg. C1); In 1959, Van Cliburn with his mother, Rildia Bee Cliburn, and in 1958, at the Tchaikovsky competition in Moscow. (Photos Match) (pg. C8)

LANGUAGE: ENGLISH

22ND STORY of Level 1 printed in FULL format.

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Almanac of Famous People

December, 1993; Fifth Edition

LENGTH: 660 words

NAME: Cliburn, Van (Harvey Lavan Jr.)

PERSONAL:

Birth: Jul 12, 1934 in Shreveport, Louisiana. Classical concert pianist; won International Tchaikovsky Piano Competition, Moscow, 1958.

OCCUPATION: Pianist

NATIONALITY: American.

SOURCES: Baker's Biographical Dictionary of Musicians. Seventh edition. Revised by Nicolas Slonimsky. New York: Macmillan, Schirmer Books, 1984. (Baker 84)

Biography Index. A cumulative index to biographical material in books and magazines. Volume 14: September, 1984-August, 1986. New York: H.W. Wilson Co., 1986. (BioIn 14)

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Who's Who in the World. 10th edition, 1991-1992. Wilmette, IL: Marquis Who's Who, 1990. (WhoWor 91)

The World Almanac Biographical Dictionary. By the editors of "The World Almanac." New York: World Almanac, 1990. (WorAlBi)

LANGUAGE: ENGLISH

LOAD-DATE-MDC: June 20, 1994

1ST STORY of Level 2 printed in FULL format.

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Los Angeles Times

July 3, 1994, Sunday, Home Edition

NAME: VAN CLIBURN

SECTION: Calendar; Page 7; Calendar Desk

LENGTH: 2551 words

HEADLINE: COVER STORY;
FINALLY, A RETURN ENGAGEMENT;
PIANIST VAN CLIBURN IS HITTING THE CONCERT TRAIL, WITH HIS FIRST STOP AT THE HOLLYWOOD BOWL IN 18 YEARS. HE'S COME A LONG WAY FROM THE CHILD PRODIGY WHO WOWED THE WORLD

BYLINE: By GRETA BEIGEL, Greta Beigel is a Times staff writer.

BODY:
"I don't like to practice, never have," Van Cliburn is saying in an interview. "But when I do get started at the piano, for the first 10 minutes I play scales, slowly. I've done this all my life."

As if to stress the importance of this regimen, Cliburn, arguably the most celebrated American pianist of his time, proceeds to demonstrate how scales should be played.

"Listen to the sounds you make," he instructs a visitor. "The sound of each tone will generate a response in you. It will give you energy." Then, drawing himself to his full 6-foot-4 height, he looks down and admonishes, "We both know you'll practice tonight, right?"

Practicing scales, and thirds and sixths and even 10ths, helped Cliburn maintain his technical mastery during a self-imposed exile from the concert platform that began in 1978 and ended nine years later when he accepted an invitation from President Reagan to perform at the White House.

"I didn't abandon the piano," he says of his much-publicized hiatus. "The piano was always there."

And so he played chamber music and pieces close to his heart, such as the Schubert sonatas, and went to the opera and hosted musical soirees for friends. It all has given the former child prodigy, who is about to turn 60, a much-needed perspective on life and recharged his energies to the point where he is ready to hit the road extensively for the first time in 16 years.

Cliburn opens a 16-city, six-week concert tour with the Moscow Philharmonic on Saturday at San Diego's Summer Pops Bowl and on July 11 visits the Hollywood Bowl, where he last appeared in 1976. Under Vassily Sinaisky, he'll perform Rachmaninoff's Third Concerto and the Tchaikovsky First, vehicles that propelled him to triumph -- and instant stardom -- at the 1958 Tchaikovsky International Piano Competition in Moscow.

Los Angeles Times, July 3, 1994

"I had been playing concerts since 1987 but not on a large scale or on a schedule," Cliburn explains. "Then everything just fell into my lap. The Moscow Philharmonic (the orchestra had accompanied Cliburn in the finals of the Tchaikovsky) contacted me and said they had this time open. Also, Mr. Sinaisky, who was an assistant to (the late) Kiril Kondrashin, is a wonderful conductor and a great musical personality. Everything fell into place."

On a visit to Los Angeles to promote the tour, Cliburn, slender and refined in a dark blue suit and red tie, meets with members of the media at a Beverly Hills hotel. He is surrounded by all sorts of managers, publicists, friends and agents, who graciously depart, one by one, when a private audience is requested.

Unfailingly courteous, Cliburn, hands clasped, dutifully answers questions, at times almost by rote. But he positively leaps to life when discussing things pianistic.

"Isn't playing the piano an interesting vocation," he muses.

But he fast becomes irritated when asked if his Tchaikovsky Concerto, played thousands of times in concert, and captured on an RCA Victor recording that has sold more than 3 million units, will reveal new insights in 1994?

"No, no, you don't do that," he says. "You carry with you all your experiences on stage and you build on that. Each performance is a rehearsal for the next one. Whatever I play in public I like, and if I learn something, it's not to play for this week or that week, but forever."

The impatience persists when it's suggested to Cliburn that perhaps the adulation that greeted his every move in the 1960s and 1970s, when he performed more than 100 concerts a year, had stymied his growth as an artist and led to his early withdrawal from the concert stage.

"That had nothing to do with it," he says. "Adulation is not a problem. It was a conscious thing for me to stop. I decided four years ahead. But you have to look back to where I came from. I grew up in a town (Kilgore, Tex.) with a population of 6,283, or whatever the roadside sign said. Everybody knew everybody. At 12, I played with the Houston Symphony and played here and there and people would come from all over to hear me. People were always a part of my life. I simply was selfish and wanted time for myself."

"I think people are just waking up to the fact that for Van Cliburn being on stage was not his *raison d'être*. I love being at home and am a contented person. I love mundane things. I love family. My only regret is that I wish I could have had children and had a lovely wife. But it didn't happen. I feel if you have a child it is a tremendous responsibility, but it would have been fun. It would have been an important facet of life."

Clearly, the biggest influence in Cliburn's life remains his beloved 97-year-old mother, Rildia Bee Cliburn, who was his teacher until he was 17 and who shares his vast home in Ft. Worth. On the day after his Bowl performance, Cliburn will fly there to join her in his birthday celebration.

"I wouldn't want to be anywhere else," he says. "She is so sweet and vivacious and I just love her."

Los Angeles Times, July 3, 1994

"But it seems impossible that I'm turning 60. I still feel as if I'm in my 20s, and feel younger than I did then. But then you look in the mirror . . . "

Harvey Lavan Cliburn Jr. was born in Shreveport, La., the son of an oil man and his pianist wife. At age 3, the precocious child climbed on a piano stool and from that day forth completed daily lessons with his mother, herself a pupil of Arthur Friedheim. The St. Petersburg-born Friedheim had studied with Anton Rubinstein and Franz Liszt before coming to New York in 1915.

With his mother at his side, the boy learned all the Chopin Etudes, the Transcendental Etudes of Liszt, as well as the Bach Inventions and Preludes and Fugues, which he played in public at age 4. At the keyboard, he also learned arithmetic and how to read.

"My mother used to say, 'Van, remember I'm not your mother, I'm your teacher,' " he says. "She was my biological mother, but in the final analysis was really a very dear friend.

"She was a master psychologist and was so spiritual, and gave me strength for all of my life. And my father? You cannot imagine what a loving, heartwarming man he was. He adored my mother and loved me and I loved him so much. The last thing he said to me before he died (in 1974) was 'Sonny Boy' -- he called me that, you know -- 'I love you and look after your mother.' That gave me a lot of strength. They made me. I would have been nothing without them."

Cliburn's mother, wanting her teen-age son to be versed in the Russian way of playing, with its technical brilliance and emphasis on Romantic expression, determined that he should study with famed pedagogue Rosina Lhevinne at the Juilliard School.

"She (Lhevinne) was great friends with mother and told her that I had the foundation already," Cliburn says. "Mother would call her if ever she had a good student and she would take them without audition."

Juilliard faculty member Martin Canin, a fellow student who became Lhevinne's assistant for 18 years prior to her death in 1976, says Cliburn clearly stood out in the class of 1954, along with talented John Browning. Although somewhat eclipsed by Cliburn's subsequent success, Browning, now 61, is enjoying a resurgence in his career.

"They had a certain poetry and a romantic something or other," Canin recalls. "Van was hugely gifted. He had a beautiful sound and phenomenal technique and charisma."

Lhevinne was instrumental along with then-Juilliard dean Mark Schubart in persuading a skeptical Cliburn, 23, to enter the quadrennial Tchaikovsky competition.

"Cliburn was initially reluctant because he was under management (Columbia Artists) and had had some modest success," says Schubart, who now directs the Lincoln Center Institute.

"You have to remember the political climate at the time. We were in the middle of the Cold War and the feeling was that in every musical competition the Russians always won. They were represented by professionals who had been

carefully trained, whereas those from the States were always students with little professional experience.

"I always thought Van had a good chance of winning because he was extraordinary, but nobody could have foreseen the international impact of his winning, the publicity and all that happened as a result."

Asked about those heady days in Moscow, when he created a furor among hysterical, flower-throwing throngs, and in New York, where an unprecedented ticker-tape parade greeted his return, Cliburn simply responds, "I was unconscious throughout."

He seems more concerned, even anxious, that his earlier successes be noted: How at age 18 he won the G. B. Dealey Memorial Award, a national competition in Dallas, followed a few months later by the Kosciusko Foundation's Chopin Scholarship Award and then the Olga Samaroff Grant.

In 1954, he received the important Leventritt Award, and a few months later made his debut with the New York Philharmonic at Carnegie Hall under the late Dimitri Mitropoulos. The conductor went on to help Cliburn prepare for the Moscow contest, persuading him to play a Taneyev Prelude and Fugue as opposed to selections by Tchaikovsky and Shostakovich.

"Taneyev was a very revered composition teacher of the Moscow Conservatory," Cliburn explains. "The piece is terribly difficult, but is very treasured piece among academicians. Metropolis knew this, and he even got the music for me. I was only one of three people who did it and was very glad I did."

Also of considerable joy to Cliburn was his association with the late Bruno Walter, a spiritual man with whom he not only collaborated as soloist -- Cliburn was at the keyboard at Walter's final appearance on Dec. 4, 1960, at the Hollywood Bowl -- but with whom he also studied conducting.

"It was so inspiring to be around him," Cliburn says. "I did 27 concerts as a conductor. After the dissolution of the Soviet Union, my record company (RCA) bought some films and one is of conducting and I played and conducted the Prokofiev Third (in Moscow). But I gave it up."

Following his return from Russia in 1958, Cliburn received a hero's welcome in his home state of Texas, where a piano competition was inaugurated in his honor in Ft. Worth in 1962. The Van Cliburn International today ranks as one of the most prestigious and controversial battlegrounds in the pianistic world, with a top prize exceeding \$200,000 in cash, plus concert engagements and management services. Although he has no voting rights, Cliburn remains a strong presence at the quadrennial event.

The competition has served yet another purpose over the years: keeping Cliburn's name alive and before the public.

Also fostering the Cliburn myth are numerous press accounts of his iconoclastic lifestyle that supposedly involves midnight suppers, all-night musical happenings at his three-story home, 5 a.m. breakfasts, 4 p.m. wake-up calls.

Are the stories true? Does Cliburn stay up all night and sleep all day?

"Naah, we do that occasionally," he replies. "We watch films, and play opera, and listen to recordings of Tebaldi and Price and, oh, that wonderful soprano, Cecilia Bartoli.

"I can work and operate well in the daytime, but I love the night when I have to work. The daytime is OK to practice fundamentals, but when having to seriously study something, between the hours of 11 and 2 a.m. are absolutely fabulous. I get clarity and there are no calls and no distractions."

In December, 1987, Cliburn emerged from his sabbatical to perform at a White House dinner honoring Mikhail Gorbachev and later at the opening of the Bob Hope Cultural Center in Palm Springs. Limited engagements followed with the Dallas Symphony and Philadelphia Orchestra before Cliburn returned in 1989 to the scene of his original triumph: the Great Hall of the Moscow Conservatory, where he performed the Liszt Concerto No. 1 -- and the Tchaikovsky.

Earlier this year, Cliburn and associates began planning his cross-country comeback tour. As a warm-up, Cliburn in recent months has played the Tchaikovsky with the Houston Symphony and then the Grant Park Symphony, under Leonard Slatkin.

Of his June 18 performance at Grant Park Music Festival, the Chicago Tribune's John von Rhein notes, "The lanky Texas pianist proved that whatever problems had forced his withdrawal from the concert stage two decades into his career, he was well-prepared to compete with the Van Cliburn who once so captured the American imagination."

While lauding Cliburn's "colossal technique" and characteristic "devil-may-care panache," Von Rhein speculated that the enormous pressure inherent in Cliburn's comeback may have "accounted for some self-conscious touches, as well as moments of uncertain coordination" with Slatkin and the orchestra.

The tour is budgeted at \$4 million. Cliburn receives \$125,000 per concert; the 115-member orchestral contingent \$75,000, plus expenses. To attract as large an audience as possible, outdoor venues have been booked, save for indoor dates in St. Louis, Detroit, Salt Lake City and New York.

Cliburn admits being nervous about his upcoming appearances.

"I have been nervous ever since I first played in public before I was 4," he says. "It's the same sensation. You want to play well, wish to serve and are always concerned."

To cash in on Cliburn's return to the concert arena, RCA Victor has reissued on its "Living Stereo" line a CD of Cliburn performing Beethoven's Fifth Concerto and the Rachmaninoff Second, with the Chicago Symphony under Fritz Reiner. Similar plans are in place for his Schumann Concerto and the Prokofiev Third.

On a recent promotional blitz to plug the CD, Cliburn, to his amazement, was mobbed by young fans at record stores seeking his autograph.

Los Angeles Times, July 3, 1994

"I couldn't get over it," Cliburn says. "Newspapers and a police report said 2,000 people showed up at a mall in Minnesota. It was the same thing in Boston and San Francisco. It's happening everywhere."

Does Cliburn revel in being a superstar?

"No, because when I'm in my little room at home and I feel all alone, I think, I wonder if anyone remembers me."

To reserve his place in the pantheon of pianistic history, Cliburn often toys with writing his memoirs, but fears he'd grow bored writing what would be his third biography. His life has been examined in print by Abram Chasins in "The Van Cliburn Legend" (1959), and in exhaustive, almost-Pollyannaish detail by Chicago Tribune arts critic Howard Reich in the 1993 "Van Cliburn" (Thomas Nelson).

Cliburn, a strong advocate for the study of music in schools, would prefer to document his ideas on education, and "write about the interesting ideas and feelings" he has about music and life in general.

"I have been around this earth long enough to have seen something. And maybe by having seen something, there is something I can say," Cliburn reminds.

"My life is bigger than the keyboard, and my world is bigger than the stage. When I was 18 I told someone that I had a feeling that the first part of my life I would work very hard and then have time for myself and a long vacation. It turned out to be a self-fulfilling prophecy."

* Van Cliburn performs Saturday at 7:30 p.m. at San Diego's Summer Pops Bowl at Embarcadero Marina Park South; \$23.50-\$150; (619) 699-4205. On July 11, he appears at 8:30 p.m. at the Hollywood Bowl; \$10-\$250; (213) 850-2000.

GRAPHIC: Photo, . . . and this year at Petrillo Music Shell in Chicago. JONATHAN KIRN / For The Times; Photo, Van Cliburn: In 1958, at the Tchaikovsky Piano Competition in Moscow, above, . . .

LANGUAGE: ENGLISH

LOAD-DATE-MDC: July 4, 1994

4TH STORY of Level 2 printed in FULL format.

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October 24, 1993, Sunday, Late Edition - Final

SECTION: Section 2; Page 1; Column 2; Arts & Leisure Desk

LENGTH: 1996 words

HEADLINE: Stepping Out Of the Shadow Of Cliburn

BYLINE: By BARBARA JEPSON; Barbara Jepson is a regular contributor to The Wall Street Journal.

BODY:

In 1954, the star pupils of the estimable Rosina Lhevinne's piano class at the Juilliard School were a young Denver native named John Browning and a young Texan named Van Cliburn. "They were at the top of everyone's list," said the composer and conductor John Williams, another keyboard major in the Lhevinne galaxy. "I began rethinking my career direction after hearing John Browning practice thundering octaves."

Although the two budding virtuosos won the highly regarded Leventritt Award within a year of each other, Mr. Browning seemed destined for the larger career. In 1956, he placed second in the Queen Elisabeth International Music Competition in Brussels, was chosen to represent the United States at the 1958 World's Fair in Belgium and made a critically acclaimed debut with the New York Philharmonic. The Philharmonic performance inspired Samuel Barber to write a Piano Concerto for him, which was given its premiere during the inaugural week of Lincoln Center, in 1962.

Those were heady times for Mr. Browning, who is celebrating his 60th-birthday year with three concerts at Alice Tully Hall, beginning on Monday. Newspaper clippings from the period chart the progress of this "young pianist brimming with talent," in the words of The New York Journal-American, who made a European concert tour and landed a recording contract before Mr. Cliburn did. He quickly became part of a new generation of American pianists active in those days -- Gary Graffman, Leon Fleisher, Byron Janis, Malcolm Frager and others -- that was expected to produce the American Horowitz.

But a host of nonmusical variables can ignite or defuse a performer's career. Mr. Browning's considerable achievements were ultimately overshadowed by the unprecedented publicity and adulation that greeted Mr. Cliburn's surprise victory at the 1958 Tchaikovsky Competition in Moscow. Six months earlier, the Soviet Union had trumped the United States in the race to launch the first space satellite. Mr. Cliburn's gold medal was viewed as a national political coup as well as an artistic triumph. The curly-haired virtuoso with genteel Southern manners was feted like a celebrity and hailed as a cultural hero.

"Van Cliburn's career after the Tchaikovsky win was like an explosion in a piano factory," said Alan Kayes, head of artists and repertory for RCA Victor from 1950 to 1962. "A lot of young pianists were psychologically devastated in its wake. It caused them to question, 'Why not me?' "

Mr. Cliburn, the first classical musician to be given a ticker-tape parade in New York, gained instant exposure through the relatively young medium of television. His first recording, the Tchaikovsky Piano Concerto for RCA Victor, quickly sold more than a million copies; by contrast, popular albums of keyboard giants like Arthur Rubinstein reportedly took many years to reach gold status. Mr. Janis soon left RCA for Mercury, because, he lamented recently, "Mr. Cliburn was taking over a lot of the repertoire I wanted to do." Mr. Cliburn's record-setting fees also ruffled feathers. The story goes that when an American orchestra sought to engage Rubinstein to play the Tchaikovsky concerto, he quipped, "What's the matter, can't they afford Cliburn?"

During Mr. Browning's Juilliard years, his musical gifts had already been contrasted to those of Mr. Cliburn. "I think Mme. Lhevinne wanted to avoid a sense of rivalry between us," Mr. Browning said the other day during a conversation in his eclectically furnished 34th-floor apartment on the Upper East Side of Manhattan. He had just returned from his waterfront home in northern Wisconsin, which he shares with Tyler, a Papillon show dog.

"She'd say" -- he imitated Lhevinne's Russian accent -- "'Vell, you know, dear, you're the musician, and he's the beeg virtuoso.' That caused a few problems for me, because she wanted to push me into playing lots of Schubert and Mozart, and I wasn't really ready to specialize in that repertoire. I needed to develop a little more of the virtuoso in me."

After Mr. Cliburn's Moscow win, such comparisons inevitably intensified. A 1958 article on Mr. Browning in The New York Journal-American was headlined "Browning Should Give Cliburn Competition," and began: "How many people have heard about the 24-year-old American pianist John Browning? By now everybody must know about Van Cliburn." A profile of Mr. Browning in The New York Post during the same year observed: "Cliburn's approach to the instrument is loving, personal, emotional and filled with a kind of coltish excitement. . . . Browning is quietly poetic, sensitive, and seems somewhat more cerebral."

At one point, the two were scheduled to perform the Tchaikovsky concerto a week apart at the Hollywood Bowl. "I'm not saying I came out badly," insisted Mr. Browning. "I'm just saying we both felt uncomfortable -- we were apples and oranges." (Mr. Cliburn, while similarly deploring such comparisons, said in a recent telephone discussion that the subject "never came up in our conversations.") Mr. Browning added, "I always felt it was so unfair, because we were different, the circumstances of our careers were different, and our playing was different."

Another significant distinction was in their ability to sell albums. When the record industry took a nose dive around 1969, many companies began eliminating all but their top moneymakers. At RCA, Mr. Browning, Mr. Graffman and Mr. Frager were among those whose contracts were terminated. By the early 70's, Mr. Browning was increasingly typecast as a Barber specialist, his career had stagnated, and he was in the throes of an artistic identity crisis.

Mr. Browning, a slender man with a pensive quality underlying his ready wit, acknowledges that he made mistakes. "I did a Mozart concerto with Georg Solti too soon and a Schumann concerto in London too soon," he said. "The performances weren't bad. They just weren't as good as they should have been." The result, he explained, was that the reviews were less favorable than they might have been; it took time to dispel those first impressions regarding his repertorial

strengths, and weaknesses.

In addition, a new crop of European pianists had entered the international marketplace, and Americans, who rarely outsold their overseas colleagues at the box office, felt the heat. "During the 1950's and early 1960's," recalled Mr. Browning, who began formal piano studies at the age of 5, "American pianists had a field day, because a whole generation was lost in Europe during World War II. Then the young Europeans like Alfred Brendel and Paul Badura-Skoda were ready to go, and they became very interesting to American audiences. Those of us who began our careers earlier, after 10 years you become" -- he paused a moment to pet Tyler, who was nestled at his side -- "sort of familiar. I think we were taken for granted."

Finally, Mr. Browning experienced burnout; years of playing nearly 100 concerts a season in the United States and abroad had taken a toll. "At one point, I had played seven different concerti in nine days," he explained. "Then you start to get ragged. If you're really conscientious, you get overworked from practicing all the time." On a deeper level, he needed to grapple with some personal, spiritual and musical issues. Always an elegant, poetic and technically impressive artist, he had begun to sound distant and routine in performance.

This soul-searching occurred when Mr. Browning was in his early 40's -- a time when many people experience garden-variety midlife crisis. For all but the biggest superstars, it is also a period when artists become harder to sell to the classical-music public. "There are three basic stages in an instrumentalist's career," said Laurence Tucker, Mr. Browning's agent at Columbia Artists Management Inc. "There's the prodigy stage, the 'limbo' stage -- from the ages of about 30 to 50 -- and the grand master stage."

After more than a decade in professional purgatory, Mr. Browning is making a comeback. A Liszt recording released by Delos in 1985 prompted rave reviews; a Stereo Review critic found it "alive with the passion of the newly converted and with the most striking freshness." Following Mr. Browning's performance of the Ravel Concerto with a visiting orchestra at Boston's Symphony Hall in 1989, Richard Dyer, the critic of The Boston Globe, observed that he had "lost none of his pianistic command while becoming a more interesting musician." Mr. Dyer went on to ask, "So where was he last season when a completely inferior pianist played this work with the Boston Symphony Orchestra?" Mr. Browning has since appeared twice with the Boston Symphony and will return this season.

In 1991 Mr. Browning won a Grammy for his remake of the Barber Concerto with Leonard Slatkin and the St. Louis Symphony on BMG. His latest album, a Barber disk for Musicmasters, includes the first recording of the "Interlude No. 1 (Adagio for Jeanne)" and a more dazzling, deeper look at the Piano Sonata than in his Desto recording of 1971. "I'm more aware of the inner workings of the sonata," he said. "It's very polyphonic. Also, I think we all got in the habit of playing the fugue a little bit too jazzily; it is jazzy, but it's still an extremely serious, virtuoso fugue. Which means that it's a stinker to record."

The Tully Hall celebration, which is being sponsored by Columbia Artists, is designed to position Mr. Browning in the grand master category, although the youthful-looking pianist, who either has remarkable genes or dyes his hair brown, does not look the part. Each program includes a new work and, of course, a piece by Barber.

The New York Times, October 24, 1993

On Monday, Mr. Browning will play Mozart and Beethoven concertos with Mr. Slatkin and the Juilliard Orchestra; Mr. Slatkin will join him at the piano to perform Barber's "Souvenirs." The second concert, on Nov. 17, is a solo recital. The final evening, a chamber concert on Dec. 8, includes a collaboration with the baritone Thomas Hampson in 10 unpublished Barber songs (already recorded for a forthcoming Deutsche Grammophon album) and the Brahms Piano Quartet in G minor. The idea, said Mr. Tucker, was to show Mr. Browning as a complete musician.

REFLECTING ON HIS career, Mr. Browning pinpointed several areas in which he believes his approach to music-making has evolved. During his early years, he said, he thought of the music "rather vertically," focusing on harmonic structure. "If I did sing at the piano, it was by accident," he added. "As I've grown older, I find that if you follow the melodic line as a singer would, then everything else falls into place, the rubati are right.

"I also think that I'm playing a little more honestly. There's an ethical way of playing and a slightly fuzzy way of playing. There are choices you make, such as whether you use a finger legato or the pedal to hold an inner voice, or how closely you follow the composer's phrasing indications. You can cheat, but as I get older, I cheat less."

Mr. Browning's current comeback may certify his status as a survivor among a generation of American pianists dogged by misfortune. Mr. Graffman and Mr. Fleisher have both found artistic fulfillment chiefly in educational pursuits, after hand ailments curtailed their concert careers; Mr. Janis has been performing on a restricted basis for the last two decades because of arthritis. And Mr. Cliburn, who never made the transition from cultural phenomenon to mature musician, retired from the concert stage in 1978 to devote himself primarily to the Van Cliburn Foundation and International Piano Competition, which he established in 1962.

"It appears that the lull in John's career gave him a chance to grow at his own leisure," said Mr. Slatkin, who has known the pianist for some 25 years. "What's emerged is a very well-rounded artist who is at the top of his form. The only thing that remains is for him to capture the imagination of a broader public."

GRAPHIC: Photos: John Browning -- If his comeback attempt succeeds, he will prove a rare survivor among a gifted generation of American pianists dogged by misfortune. (Sara Krulwich/The New York Times) (pg. 1); John Browning, circa 1963 -- A contender in the race to produce an American Horowitz, he seemed destined for the a biggest career of all. (I. W. Schmidt); Van Cliburn during a ticket-tape parade in 1958 after winning in Moscow -- A lot of young pianists were left asking, "Why not me?" (Neal Boenzi/The New York Times) (pg. 30)

LANGUAGE: ENGLISH

LOAD-DATE-MDC: October 24, 1993

11TH STORY of Level 2 printed in FULL format.

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April 28, 1991, Sunday, Late Edition - Final

NAME: Van Cliburn

CATEGORY: Music

SECTION: Section 2; Page 1; Column 3; Arts & Leisure Desk

LENGTH: 2137 words

HEADLINE: CLASSICAL MUSIC;
As Ever, Cliburn Does It His Way

BYLINE: By JOSEPH HOROWITZ; Joseph Horowitz is the author of "The Ivory Trade: Music and the Business of Music at the Van Cliburn International Piano Competition" (Summit Books, 1990).

BODY:

For millions of Americans who retain the image of a tall, blond and blue-eyed Texas boy who conquered Moscow and returned to New York blowing kisses from an open car, it will seem hard to believe that Van Cliburn is now 56 years old.

We have seen so little of him in recent seasons -- on Wednesday evening, he performs in New York City for the first time since 1976 -- that we still mainly envision him as of 1958. His television appearances on "Person to Person" and "What's My Line?" revealed an indelible innocence and charm. His recording of the Tchaikovsky First Piano Concerto topped the LP charts along with Johnny Mathis and the soundtrack for "South Pacific."

The intensity of Mr. Cliburn's acclaim was legendary: In Philadelphia, a shrieking crowd tore the door handles off his limousine. In Chicago, the Elvis Presley Fan Club changed its name to the Van Cliburn Fan Club. Time magazine described him as "Horowitz, Liszt and Presley rolled into one." Previous pianists had achieved comparably frenzied fame. But none had known the lightning and pervasive stardom Mr. Cliburn enjoyed as a result of winning the Tchaikovsky International Piano Competition.

A second component of the Van Cliburn story was his retirement 20 years later. At the age of 43, Mr. Cliburn stopped giving concerts. With his mother -- who was his first piano teacher and to whom he is devoted -- he eventually settled in Fort Worth. There he purchased an 18-acre estate and became a prominent and popular civic figure, well known for his nocturnal habits (he sometimes rises at dusk), navy blue suits (he is always formally attired), impulsive generosity (he contributes lavishly to the Broadway Baptist Church, among other local causes) and sentimental attachments (his vast house contains nine pianos, closets full of unworn clothes and various undiscardable birthday and holiday decorations).

The luxury and apparent ease of Mr. Cliburn's post-career life style invited contradictory appraisals. Was his a talent gone to waste? Or had he wisely and resourcefully found a happiness beyond the grueling regime he once obeyed as a touring virtuoso? These questions -- and others of more general interest --

The New York Times, April 28, 1991

will resound this week when Mr. Cliburn performs the Tchaikovsky concerto with Zubin Mehta and the New York Philharmonic.

The resonance of the Cliburn story cannot be overestimated. Today's music business is overrun with competitions, with their victims and beneficiaries. Mr. Cliburn's example remains the central inspiration or warning. Instant fame expands or diminishes the artistic potential of our youngest, most precocious musical talents. Mr. Cliburn's story seemingly summarizes every opportunity and risk.

And yet his particular victory can never be repeated. It must be remembered -- or realized, by those too young to remember -- that the Cold War was its essential context. Russian pianists and violinists had dominated the Chopin competition in Warsaw and the Queen Elisabeth in Brussels. Sputnik, launched on Oct. 5, 1957, reintensified cultural and scientific rivalry between East and West. Two months later, Moscow invited American participation in the new Tchaikovsky international music competition. Dmitri Shostakovich, the leading Soviet composer, was chairman of the organizing committee. The jury was dominated by Soviet-bloc nations.

But Mr. Cliburn catapulted to the head of the pack. People wept when he played. His pandemonious victory confirmed the overwhelming popular verdict of days before. In both the Soviet Union and the United States, he was inevitably called "the American Sputnik."

Living a dream, Mr. Cliburn in Moscow moved with a clairvoyant sureness, touching outstretched hands, pledging friendship between nations. To caged Russians, craving warming contact with the West, he personified American openness and informality. More profoundly, he personified musical virtues the Russians called their own. Decrying the "mechanical" performances of Soviet-trained contestants, Moscow critics called Mr. Cliburn an inspired Romantic, whose long, line, plush tone and easy technique -- he shunned flamboyance -- encouraged an uncanny identification with the music of Tchaikovsky and Rachmaninoff.

Mr. Cliburn's coup de grace was a majestically expansive, gorgeously melancholic reading of the Rachmaninoff Third Piano Concerto. The composer Aram Khachaturian called Mr. Cliburn's performance "better than Rachmaninoff's; you find a virtuoso like this once or twice in a century." Sviatoslav Richter called Van Cliburn a genius.

Nothing about the Cliburn story is more instructive than the American response to all this Russian validation. Mr. Cliburn had already won the leading American competition, the Leventritt in 1954 -- and there were no parades. Coming home from Moscow, Mr. Cliburn was greeted with ticker tape and marching bands. But his American celebrity celebrated his Russian celebrity, not the pianism that had earned it. As Howard Taubman observed in The New York Times, "Over and over again the question . . . had been: 'Is this Van Cliburn really that good?'" According to one rumor, the Russians had engineered an American triumph as a grand propaganda gesture.

In America, Mr. Cliburn enjoyed rampant popular acclaim. Yet the populace lacked the urgent empathy and enthusiasm for Tchaikovsky and Rachmaninoff that the people's Russian verdict in Moscow had exuded. Also, among America's musical elite, there were those who disdained the apple-pie pedigree of a concert

The New York Times, April 28, 1991

artist who didn't smoke or drink; who was so patriotic that he began his recitals with "The Star-Spangled Banner"; who was so religious that he once sang in Billy Graham's choir at Madison Square Garden.

Finally, certain voices questioned the breadth of Mr. Cliburn's musical intelligence. He played neither chamber music nor contemporary music. He tirelessly recycled his "prize-winning program" of the Tchaikovsky First and Rachmaninoff Third. One early warning signal, from Paul Henry Lang of The New York Herald Tribune, suggested that Mr. Cliburn risked becoming a "flesh and blood jukebox" and suffering "permanent intellectual disability" unless he took time off to pursue "a more catholic study of music."

But this was not Mr. Cliburn's way. Year in, year out, he performed 100 times and more a season. Though his repertoire was larger than his critics imagined, he swore permanent allegiance to the Romantic warhorses he adored. His RCA albums bore titles like "My Favorite Chopin" and "My Favorite Encores"; the cover photographs showed a perpetually youthful and dreamy-faced artist. In places like New York (where he lived, yet appeared with diminishing frequency), sophisticates envisioned him mainly regaling ladies with blue hair and fur coats. A more serious complaint was that Mr. Cliburn's playing was increasingly erratic.

Mr. Cliburn's life away from the piano during these years could hardly have been normal. Wherever he moved, he evoked the imagery of his unrepeatable, unsurpassable Moscow triumph. His omnipresent mother, his inescapable aura of celebrity, were defining factors. One 1966 observer commented on "a sheath of reserve so thick you could cut it with a Bowie knife."

A musician who remembers his summertime visits to the Interlochen festival suggests: "Van wasn't the least bit pretentious -- shy, with a streak of boisterous humor. His rapport with the kids was wonderful. But I'm not sure he was happy. It was as if every event of his life had sprung a further trap on him. However much he wanted to break out of that, there were further obstacles in the way, including those two concertos, which everyone expected him to play. He seemed a genuine person -- he couldn't have been nicer -- but lonely."

If this reading is correct, Mr. Cliburn's "intermission" (as he calls it), and his removal to Fort Worth, constitute a logical strategy of liberation. Commenting on his withdrawal from the stage, Mr. Cliburn has said that he wanted to travel less, to eat dinner when he felt like it, to attend concerts and pursue friendships. "I had planned to stop playing for a long time," he once told an interviewer, "and I wanted to do it while I was young enough to enjoy it."

Mr. Cliburn clearly does not intend to relinquish his present life style: he is returning to the stage on his own terms. He employs no manager or publicist, preferring the informal liaison services of his friend Susan Tilley, the chairman of the Van Cliburn Foundation. Ms. Tilley is sometimes able to contact him, sometimes not. The greatest understatement ever made about Mr. Cliburn was Ms. Tilley's when she observed, "Van keeps no rigid schedule."

Since resuming his career two years ago with the Philadelphia Orchestra at the Mann Music Center, Mr. Cliburn has performed in Moscow, Leningrad, Dallas, Lincoln (Neb.), Kilgore (Tex.), Fort Worth and at the Tilles Center on Long Island. In addition to his appearance on Wednesday at Carnegie Hall, he is

The New York Times, April 28, 1991

scheduled to give a recital in Kalamazoo, Mich., next Sunday. And that is all -- for now.

To date, this second phase of Mr. Cliburn's concert career has been informative. At the Mann Center after his 11-year layoff, he sounded tentative in Liszt's E-flat Concerto. He then gave a memorable reading of the Tchaikovsky First, lyrically yearning, unaffectedly spacious. His typical eschewal of display -- the tempos were uniformly moderate -- seemed to disappoint the audience, whose polite response suggested that Mr. Cliburn's celebrityhood needed freshening. But in the Soviet Union, weeks later, he was mobbed, adulated, showered with bouquets. His performance of the Tchaikovsky concerto at the Tilles Center six months ago sounded labored. Evidently, he remains both a major pianist and an erratic one.

How does today's Van Cliburn feel about things? Mr. Cliburn himself is an unlikely source of information. This is not because he is evasive or arrogant; on the contrary, he is a consumingly gracious man -- whose graciousness, however, more forestalls than facilitates confessional exchange. For journalists, he presents a complex and pleasurable presence. Yet he cannot be interviewed; he shows neither the urge nor the need to confide.

Speaking from Fort Worth the other day, Mr. Cliburn was, as always, the acme of courtesy. His smooth, soothing drawl, his honeyed bass-baritone burnished his practiced anecdotes and metaphors. Commenting on his return to the stage, he said: "You know, it feels just the same. It feels as if I never left." He is thinking about doing some recordings and videos, but nothing definite as yet. "I've never done a video. But I've been compelled to think about it because RCA wants it. And that sort of interests me."

So far, Mr. Cliburn has resumed his career performing music with which he has long been associated. Is he considering acquiring anything new? "I used to go through all kinds of repertoire," he replied. "But you know, for me music is something very personal, and anything I play is very personal. I really feel that music is like a painting in sound. You take it into your inner house, and into your inner heart, and never lose it. It isn't something tangible, that's subject to the vicissitudes of life -- 'where moth and rust doth corrupt,' as the Bible says. I really do believe that great music is something that can never fade. It's eternally mysterious."

And so, eternally, is Mr. Cliburn.

CLIBURN ON CD, SMALLER THAN LIFE

Van Cliburn is a notably "public" pianist, adapted to large spaces and to large audiences whose attentiveness he craves and returns. Even more than most instrumentalists, he records best in concert, not in the studio.

His two in-concert recordings are of Rachmaninoff's Third Concerto, with Kirill Kondrashin and the Symphony of the Air (an incomparable accompaniment), recorded in Carnegie Hall in 1958 (RCA 6209; CD), and Rachmaninoff's Second Sonata, recorded in Moscow in 1960 (RCA 7941; CD and cassette). These readings are not febrile, à la Vladimir Horowitz, but sonorous, big-hearted, beautifully sad.

The New York Times, April 28, 1991

Of Mr. Cliburn's studio recordings, two imminent reissues are among his most lustrous and spontaneous: MacDowell's Second Piano Concerto (BMG 60420; CD and cassette) and "Favorite Encores" by Chopin, Debussy, Rachmaninoff, Schumann-Liszt, Scriabin and Szymanowski (BMG 60726; CD and cassette).

John Pfeiffer, Mr. Cliburn's longtime RCA producer, has for years been urging the pianist to permit release of a Brahms B-flat Concerto with Kondrashin, recorded in performance in the Soviet Union. Mr. Cliburn, whose tight-lipped studio job with Fritz Reiner and the Chicago Symphony (RCA 7942; CD and cassette) barely hints at the impact he commands in this music, is still making up his mind.

GRAPHIC: Photos: Van Cliburn in recital at the Palace of Congresses in Moscow, June 1962 -- His American celebrity celebrated his Russian celebrity, not his pianism (United Press International); Van Cliburn (Carnegie Hall) (pg. 25)

Drawing: Caricature of Van Cliburn--Was his a talent gone to waste, or had he wisely found happiness outside a career? (Al Hirschfeld) (pg. 1)

LANGUAGE: ENGLISH

LOAD-DATE-MDC: April 28, 1991

21ST STORY of Level 2 printed in FULL format.

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December 10, 1987, Thursday, Late City Final Edition

NAME: Raisa Gorbachev

CATEGORY: Politics and Government (Foreign)

SECTION: Section A; Page 1, Column 3; Foreign Desk

LENGTH: 1149 words

HEADLINE: THE SUMMIT;
Frost in the White House for 2 First Ladies

BYLINE: By ELAINE SCIOLINO, Special to the New York Times

DATELINE: WASHINGTON, Dec. 9

BODY:

Raisa Gorbachev paused for a moment on her tour of the White House today when a reporter asked whether she would like to live in such a place.

"It's an official house," she said. "I would say that humanly speaking a human being would like to live in a regular home. This is a museum."

Before she could say much more, Nancy Reagan interrupted, taking her elbow and steering her toward the imposing marble mantelpiece in the State Dining Room. Mrs. Reagan actually lives upstairs in the cozier family quarters, but she showed no inclination to apologize for the stately quality of the mansion's public rooms. "I want to show you something I really like," Mrs. Reagan said.

A Verbal Tug-of-War

It was Mrs. Reagan's day to be hostess and Mrs. Gorbachev's day to be the gracious guest. This guest did not seem shy about appearing to upstage her hostess.

While their husbands were smiling and already calling each other "Ron" and "Mikhail," their strong-willed wives remained locked in a verbal tug-of-war that even official interpreters could do little to disguise.

From the first stop on the White House tour, when Mrs. Reagan pointed out a rather ethereal portrait of Pat Nixon, Mrs. Gorbachev made it clear that she wanted to set the agenda.

Changing the Subject

Swinging away toward a portrait of Lady Bird Johnson, the former professor of Marxist-Leninist theory assumed a schoolteacher tone and asked: "This picture, that we face, to what century does it belong? I would say it's a typical picture of the 20th century."

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Undaunted, Mrs. Reagan explained that the Nixon portrait was painted by Henriette Wyeth Hurd, Andrew Wyeth's sister, which prompted Mrs. Gorbachev to note that an exhibition of paintings by the Wyeth family was recently shown in Moscow.

The two women were careful to dismiss reports that they disliked each other.

'It Seems Smaller Today'

Before the tour began, Mrs. Reagan told reporters she found such reports "so silly, so silly," adding, "I assume she feels that way."

But Mrs. Gorbachev, whose main home is believed to be an apartment in downtown Moscow, was just assertive enough to give some listeners the impression that she was sparring.

"This is where we were last night," Mrs. Reagan said when they entered the State Dining Room. "It seems to be smaller today," Mrs. Gorbachev replied.

When Mrs. Reagan showed her the Red Room, Mrs. Gorbachev replied: "Yes, we were in this room yesterday. Mrs. Shultz was quite an active guide for me." She was referring to a brief tour of the room by Secretary of State George P. Shultz's wife, Helena.

When Mrs. Reagan acknowledged that an Albert Bierstadt landscape was difficult to see because of the television cameras, Mrs. Gorbachev readily agreed, adding, "I see the light here is a problem."

Peppering Mrs. Reagan with questions as if the First Lady were a graduate student facing an oral examination, Mrs. Gorbachev at times seemed to test Mrs. Reagan's composure.

'What a Big Help I Am'

Asked when the White House was built, Mrs. Reagan apparently could not give an answer, leaving it to Betty Monkman, the White House assistant curator, to tell Mrs. Gorbachev the dates - between 1792 and 1800.

"What a big help I am," Mrs. Reagan said to reporters with a sigh.

Several times during the 45-minute tour, Mrs. Reagan let Ms. Monkman do the talking.

At times, Mrs. Gorbachev seemed more interested in the television cameras than in the tour or her hostess. She greeted reporters with a cheery "Good morning," the only English she used during the day.

Turning toward the cameras, she told Mrs. Reagan, "I invite you to come to Leningrad and to Moscow because you know how rich those cities are."

Snapping at Reporters

She did not invite Mrs. Reagan for a reciprocal visit to the homes she shares with her husband, which include their main Moscow apartment, another in the Kremlin and a dacha in the country.

The New York Times, December 10, 1987

Mrs. Reagan, perhaps unwilling to show displeasure with her guest, lost her patience instead with the reporters who kept asking Mrs Gorbachev personal questions and delaying the tour.

When one reporter asked Mrs. Gorbachev whether she would go shopping, and Mrs. Gorbachev said no, Mrs. Reagan snapped, "I'm not going to be able to show her the rest of the house."

And when Mrs. Gorbachev spoke at length about Soviet education after a reporter asked whether she had studied American history and English before the trip, Mrs. Reagan interjected, "Regrettably, we have to move on."

An unstoppable Mrs. Gorbachev refused to budge.

'I've Answered This 5 Times'

At one point, in the East Room, Mrs. Gorbachev interrupted Mrs. Reagan in mid-sentence, telling her how much the pianist Van Cliburn, who played at the State Dinner Tuesday night, is liked in the Soviet Union.

"Well, he is very much liked here," Mrs. Reagan replied. When Mrs. Gorbachev was asked again during a visit to the Blue Room whether she got along with her hostess, an exasperated Mrs. Reagan turned to the reporter and said: "Oh, I've answered this, I think, five times."

In a moment of solidarity, Mrs. Gorbachev replied: "Well, everything is all right. It seems to me Mrs. Reagan gave the answer, and that was her word."

Discussion of Problems

And the two women apparently had a fruitful discussion about the drug problem in the United States and alcoholism in the Soviet Union, over coffee in the Red Room.

By the end of the morning visit, however, White House aides were so miffed by Mrs. Gorbachev's performance that they were reduced to sniping about her clothes.

"A bit cocktailish, don't you think?" said one White House aide about Mrs. Gorbachev's outfit: a black crepe dress with satin collar and cummerbund and rhinestone buckle, black suede stiletto shoes and clutch bag and rhinestone applique on her baggy hose.

Mrs. Reagan wore an understated Oscar de la Renta Glen plaid dress and a simple gold collar necklace and earrings.

The Patient Husbands

Mrs. Gorbachev's comments took so much time that President Reagan and the Soviet leader, Mikhail S. Gorbachev, had to wait in the Diplomatic Reception Room for 10 minutes after their morning meeting while their wives finished coffee.

While they were waiting, Mr. Reagan told a group of reporters later in the day, he and Mr. Gorbachev planned a little joke.

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"I suggested something to him," the President said, "and we both did it -that when finally they came around and through the door, he and I were both looking at our watches. We got a laugh."

Mrs. Gorbachev then went to visit the National Gallery.

Tonight, as the President and Mrs. Reagan entered the Soviet Embassy for dinner, Mrs. Reagan was asked what she discussed with Mrs. Gorbachev were as good friends as their husbands seemed to be, Mrs. Reagan said, "I never said we weren't."

GRAPHIC: Photos of Raisa Gorbachev and Nancy Reagan (pg. A1) (NYT/Marilynn K. Yee); Raisa Gorbachev talking to J. Carter Brown and John R. Stevenson (pg. A19) (NYT/Jim Wilson)

LANGUAGE: ENGLISH

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SEPTEMBER 28, 1994

TALKING POINTS

Acknowledgements:

Language, geography, and systems of government separate nations but, music is universal. And sometimes, music can even bridge those differences. In 1958, when a young Texan won the International Tchaikovsky Piano Competition in Moscow, he became a kind of cultural liaison whose talents would continue, for the rest of the century, to bring East and West together.

Beloved in the former Soviet Union and in the U.S., Mr. Van Cliburn has been a cultural icon shared by both states. And Mr. Cliburn is no stranger to these functions. In 1987, Mr. Cliburn was a guest of the Reagan's at the Gorbachev State Dinner.

A brilliant pianist and an ambassador of goodwill, Mr. Cliburn has shown us that each one of us can make a contribution to humanity in our own special ways. That politics and diplomacy can often fall short of the magic of/in art, emotion, and the spirit.

Van Cliburn

- won 1st Tchaikovsky Piano Competition, Moscow 1958 (gold medal)
- returned in 1989, to the scene of his original triumph: the Great Hall of the Moscow Conservatory
- Cold War: Russian pianists & violinists dominated the Chopin competition in Warsaw; Queen Elisabeth in Brussels
- cultural rivalry between E & W
- pledged friendship between nations
personified musical virtues the Russians called their own
- Mrs. Gorbachev - liked in the Soviet Union

↳ on the earlier, Sputnik

, artistic triumph