

Pianist Berman is now getting recognition

NEW YORK (AP) — In 1955, Soviet pianist Lazar Berman has moved rapidly from the status of one of the world's best-kept secrets to superstardom. He often is compared with Vladimir Horowitz, both for dazzling pianism and for his ability to sell out concert halls overnight.

This fall, on Nov. 22 in Los Angeles, the 48-year-old pianist will give his most ambitious American tour by playing his 100th concert in the United States. He made his quickly arranged U.S. debut in the gymnasium at Miami University in Oxford, Ohio, Jan. 14, 1976.

Before that, most American music lovers had never heard the name Lazar Berman, and only a few collectors of imported classical records were fervent fans.

But just before his arrival, music critics heard that a pyrotechnic keyboard phenomenon and giant of the romantic repertoire was on the way, and they went to Ohio.

Time magazine's report that "Berman is a virtuoso whose blinding technique appears an easy riddle to that of Horowitz" was typical. The race was on in music-going and celebrity-watching circles to hear for themselves. A few found the raves exaggerated but almost all added praise to previous praise and decided Berman was an artist they wanted to hear every time he came to town.

In conversation, Berman seems relatively uninterested in his sudden celebrity. A big man with big hands, appearing comfortably untidy, Berman does sparkle with interest when he talks about his family.

His mother studied piano seriously and taught him to play at age 2. Did he want to practice? "Never. Until today. I still don't."

But his son, Pavlik, who is 8, chose violin for himself.

"He wants to practice," Berman says. "When I am away from home, he phones me but he won't talk long. He wants to practice." He says he doesn't go out of the apartment. He is too busy.

Berman met his second wife, he says, "after I saw a picture of her at a friend's house. Immediately I sort of said, 'This is the woman I want to marry.' Afterwards I found out she teaches piano. That made it even better."

Berman says he doesn't think he should be compared with Horowitz "because Horowitz is unique. If they do make the comparison, it is a big honor for me and an even bigger responsibility. It forces me to work because Horowitz has worked up to now, his 74th year."

Berman says he is not discriminated against because he is a Jew. He wasn't ambitious and didn't push to get concerts, he says.

"I think it is the personality of an artist that matters in the playing. If I play too often I might lose some of the individual things I do now, some unique quality of personality."

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Entry tests still raising questions

PRINCETON, N.J. (AP) — More and more people are asking questions about the professional question tests.

Who gives the tests that permit or deny entry to colleges and professions for millions of people each year? Are the tests fair? Are they misused?

Q: questions become more and more pertinent. Many of the questions — from parents, educators and lawmakers — are directed at the Educational Testing Service, the titan of the testing industry.

On a bucolic 400-acre campus outside the well-heeled university town, its 2,000 employees go quietly about their business, constructing and processing the multiple-choice exams that can raise or dash the hopes of several million people a year.

Success or failure on the Scholastic Aptitude Test can determine whether a student attends the college of his choice. Other tests help choose entrants for dozens of occupations, from podiatry and police work to architecture and auto mechanics. The State Department uses an ETS test for Foreign Service officers. And ETS, with questionnaires supplied by the Central Intelligence Agency, even tests prospective spies.

Founded in 1947 as a non-profit business by three education groups, ETS generated revenues of \$70 million last year, most of it in test fees.

Among those who question the ETS tests is Peter J. Liacouras, dean of Temple University Law School. He says ETS is becoming "the cradle-to-grave arbiter of social mobility in America."

Its tests inhibit "well-roundedness" and reward "the skilled test-takers, hip-shooters and crossword puzzle whizzes," Liacouras contends. "Kids are being stereotyped more and more, even in pre-school, as either 'bright' or 'hard to teach' on the basis of some test score."

William W. Turnbull, 58, a Canadian-born psychologist who joined ETS shortly after its creation and became president in 1970, bristles at the notion that ETS is America's "arbiter of social mobility."

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