

## A Letter from the Publisher

When Rome Correspondent Erik Amfitheatrof went backstage at the Stadt Casino in Basel to seek out Mstislav Rostropovich, this week's cover subject, the famous Russian cellist-conductor gave him a joyous greeting. "My uncle Massimo is a concert cellist," says Amfitheatrof, "and when I introduced myself to Rostropovich, he cried, 'Your face is like Mass-eemo, and Mass-eemo is my dear friend.' It was an invitation to the extraordinary warmth that pours from Rostropovich like lava from some Slavic Vesuvius."

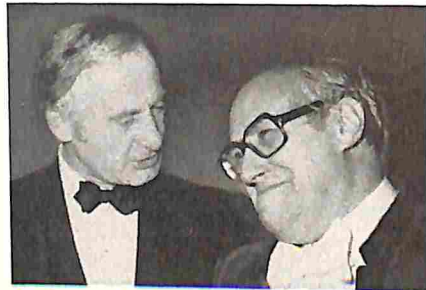
Interviewing Rostropovich's many friends and associates for our story on the new musical director of Washington's National Symphony Orchestra, eleven TIME correspondents in bureaus around the world found similar signs of lava, smoke and fire wherever Rostropovich has wandered. In Jerusalem, Isaac Stern talked to TIME's Robert Slater about "the intensity, the sheer eruptive force behind Rostropovich's enthusiasm." In New York City, Reporter-Researcher Rosemarie Tauris Zadikov interviewed Leonard Bernstein, who recalled how Rostropovich first came to dinner a decade ago, bringing "records, tapes, scores and messages from Shostakovich." Washington Correspondent Bonnie Angelo went to question Rostropovich and to watch his orchestral rehearsals in his

newly adopted city. Recalling his emotional concert with the National Symphony on the Fourth of July, 1975—the first year of the Russian's new life in the West—Angelo felt that his story "is political as well as musical." Says she: "It occurred to me then, as he led the orchestra in a rousing *Stars and Stripes Forever* encore, that there in Kennedy Center, not in the fireworks display on the mall, we were seeing the true meaning of our Independence Day—freedom of the soul."

International Editor Jesse Birnbaum, who was assisted by Reporter-Researcher Nancy Newman, flew to Washington last week for Rostropovich's premiere concert as musical director and had a similar feeling as he began writing this story. Says Birnbaum: "With Rostropovich, there is his beautiful music, but there is also the man—his poverty as a boy, his great triumphs, his struggle with Soviet authorities, his coming to America. It's a remarkable tale."

Birnbaum belongs to a musical family: his wife is a professional violist, one of his sons a pianist who also happens to practice law, the other son a flautist who is studying composition at Stanford. Birnbaum himself admits to playing the piano "badly." Can he play a stringed instrument? "Only a tennis racquet," says Birnbaum solemnly, "but I like fiddling with words."

Ralph P. Davidson



Birnbaum with Rostropovich in Washington

BILL PIERCE

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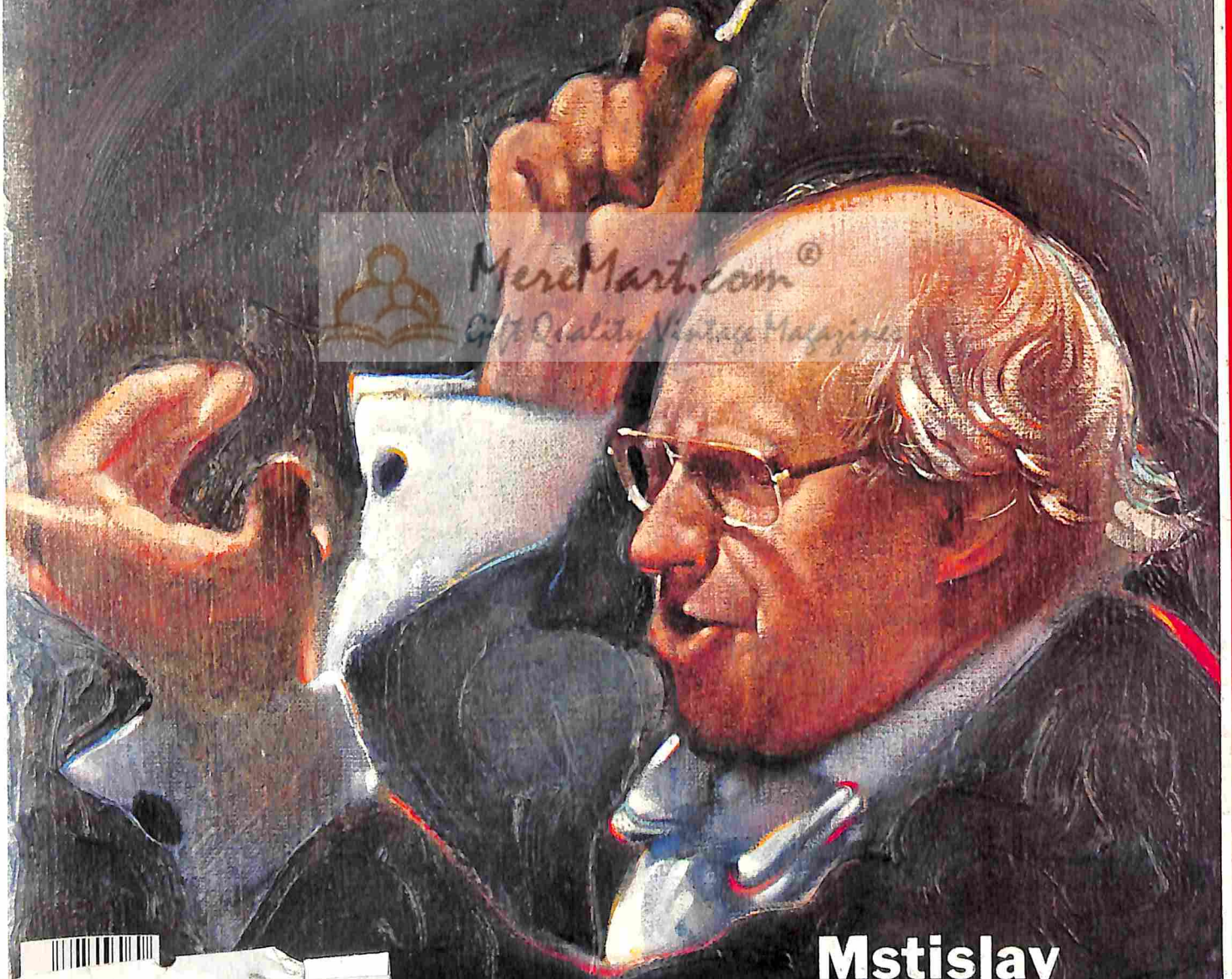
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**Carter Blasts  
Big Oil**

# TIME

## The Magnificent Maestro



**Mstislav  
Rostropovich**

JL 78 CRL 990530 98T 55 65 67  
MRS O A CARLSON  
BOX 53  
NM YORK MLS MN 56567