

For immediate release  
Wednesday, May 28, 1975

THE WHITE HOUSE  
Office of the Press Secretary to Mrs. Ford

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Mrs. Ford will attend a final competition of the Queen Elisabeth International Music Competition Thursday evening, May 29, as the guest of Queen Fabiola. The Queen and Mrs. Ford will be seated in the Royal Box at the Palais des Beaux Arts at 8 p.m.

The Queen and Mrs. Ford will dine privately at Laeken Palace prior to the competition and arrive at the concert hall together. Included in the dinner at Laeken Palace: Princess Paola; Mrs. Helmut Schmidt, wife of the Chancellor of the Federal Republic of Germany; Mrs. Pierre Elliott Trudeau, wife of the Prime Minister of Canada; Mrs. Trygve Bratelli, wife of the Prime Minister of Norway; Mrs. Jan Sauvagnargues, wife of the Foreign Minister of France; Mrs. Vasco Goncalves, wife of the Prime Minister of Portugal, and her daughter, Miss Maria Goao Goncalves; Mrs. Leo Tindemans, wife of the Prime Minister of Belgium; Mrs. Renaat van Elslande, wife of the Foreign Minister of Belgium; Mrs. Joseph M.A.H. Luns, wife of the Secretary General of NATO.

Finalists in the piano competition May 29 are Larry Graham, representing the United States, and Sergei Iuchkevitch, representing the Soviet Union.

The Queen and Mrs. Ford will be met at the Royal Entrance of the Palais des Beaux Arts concert hall by Count de Launoit, president of the Queen Elisabeth Piano Competition. The Queen and Mrs. Ford will be joined in the Royal Box by Mrs. Leonard Firestone, wife of the United States Ambassador to Belgium, and by other guests who will have attended the dinner earlier at Laeken Palace.

Larry Graham is the only American musician in the Elisabeth contest finals. A native of Tulsa, Okla., the 31-year-old pianist studied at The Juilliard School with Rosina Lhevinne. Graham will be performing an unpublished concerto which all finalists are required to perform; three movements of Petrouchka by Stravinsky, scored for piano solo; and Chopin's first

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concerto for piano and orchestra.

Sergei Iuchkevitch is a 22-year-old Russian pianist who has studied at The Moscow Conservatory. He will play the required concerto; thirteen studies for solo piano by Schumann; and the first concerto for piano and orchestra of Sergei Prokofiev.

Graham and Iuchkevitch will be accompanied by the Symphony Orchestra of RTB (Radio-Television Belge), led by the American conductor Irwin Hoffman.

The Queen Elisabeth International Music Competition is internationally known as one of the world's most prestigious music contests. The finals are being held May 26-31 this year, with the winner to be announced late in the evening May 31.

There are three stages of the Elisabeth Competition. This year's contest began May 2 with 59 musicians, 24 of whom were selected semi-finalists. Twelve of those were selected for the third and final stage of the contest.

The competition was founded in 1951 by the late Queen Elisabeth, widow of King Albert and the grandmother of King Baudouin. It came under the patronage of Queen Fabiola in 1967.

The contest is devoted in alternating years to competition in piano, the violin and composition. Musicians are young -- generally late teens to early 30s -- and are from throughout the world.

When the 12 finalists are selected, they are given an unpublished concerto by a contemporary Belgian and are secluded for a week to learn the composition. (This year the concerto is by J. Maes, director of the Musical Academy of Boom and a noted Belgian composer.) The final competition is judged on performance of the new concerto; a concerto of the artist's choosing, with orchestra accompaniment; and a solo piano piece from the finalist's own repertoire.

Twelve prizes are awarded, the first prize being a gold medal and 200,000 Belgian francs. The prestige of having reached the finals of the competition, however, is generally considered the contest's greatest reward for a musician.

The competition is decided by 15 judges of various nationalities, all noted musicians and many former winners of the Elisabeth competition. Among the judges are Soviet pianist Emil Gilels; Leon Fleisher, well-known American pianist and conductor; and European pianist Geza Anda.