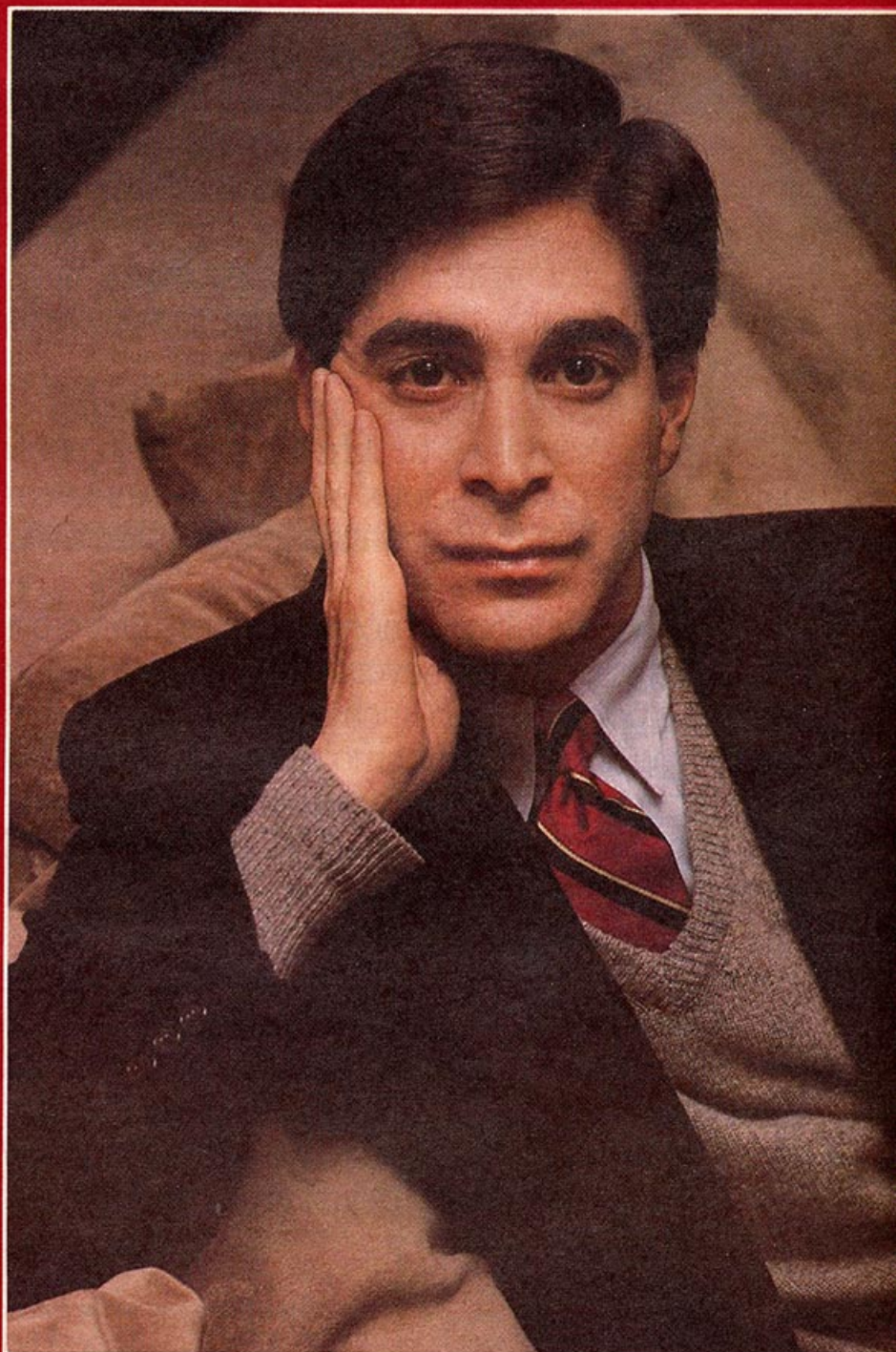


# BUFFALO

MAGAZINE OF THE BUFFALO NEWS

Inside: A  
PHYSIC

The Star-Studded  
World  
of **Glenn  
Plaskin**





# LIFE AMONG THE STARS

*You don't know who Glenn Plaskin is?  
Vladimir Horowitz, Calvin Klein  
and Jackie Onassis do.*

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BY KAREN BRADY

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**"H**ello, this is Katharine Hepburn." Glenn Plaskin stared at his office phone. "You're kidding," he said. "No," replied Hepburn, and another extraordinary friendship was born for Glenn Plaskin, a former Western New Yorker whose 32 years have been filled with star-studded accomplishments.

First a successful concert pianist, later a successful and celebrated biographer, he is now a successful magazine writer specializing in in-depth interviews with the world's most dazzling, most sought-after and most revered celebrities.

"But Miss Hepburn," he emphasizes, "was not calling about an interview. She was calling about my book. I'd sent her a copy as a present. She said she'd read all 600 pages."

Plaskin's book, *HOROWITZ: A Biography*, stunned the music world when it was published two years ago, the first biography ever of the renowned Russian-born pianist and eccentric, Vladimir Horowitz.

It stunned because it was candid and dealt with Horowitz's suspected homosexuality, uneven marriage and nervous breakdowns. The book was also widely well-received — a Morrow publication now available in several languages as well as Quill paperback.

"Miss Hepburn said her chauffeur had once been Horowitz's chauffeur," recalls Plaskin, who was soon invited by Hepburn to tea.

"She lives in Manhattan in a brownstone on the East Side. The first thing she said to me when she saw me was, 'Omigod, I thought you'd be

50.' When I asked her why, she said, 'Because your book is so damn long.' Then she said to her housekeeper, 'Nora, this is Mr. Plaskin. He's 10 years old. Give him a cookie.'"

Plaskin had, of course, wanted to do an interview with the famed "Kate." In fact, he had asked for one earlier through her agent and had been told that the actress, now in her 70s, almost never grants interviews, that it was next to useless to ask.

"Miss Hepburn made it clear that this invitation was for tea — totally tea," Plaskin says of their first meeting. "I regarded it as tea-as-a-test. But now that I have come to know Miss Hepburn,

it doesn't matter anymore to me whether she wants to do an interview or not. Her friendship is what is more important."

A serious writer for the past eight years, Plaskin is lean, attractive and sensitive in appearance. His hair is dark, as are his eyes, and his manner is open and unassuming, which indubitably helps as he attempts to secure celebrity interview after celebrity interview — and does.

Nancy Reagan, Calvin Klein, Joan Rivers, Adolfo, Jamie Wyeth — all have consented to be interviewed by Plaskin. His interview with

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KAREN BRADY is a staff reporter for The News.

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**WHITE HOUSE TALK:**  
When Glenn Plaskin interviewed Nancy Reagan in the library of the White House, the first thing she said was, "You really have a friend in Calvin Klein."

## Plaskin

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Carol Burnett will be the April cover story in *Family Circle*. He is interviewing Grant Tinker for *Cosmopolitan* and Sen. Ted Kennedy and his children for *Ladies Home Journal*.

**H**e has lunched — twice — with Jacqueline Onassis and celebrated clothes designer Calvin Klein. "People literally dropped their forks when we walked in," he says of those occasions.

And Plaskin says he will remember all his life an afternoon with the late Polish-born pianist and composer Artur Schnabel. "He must have been 92 or 93. ... He looked like a soldier of humanity somehow ... like an old lion."

He has spent time with Kitty Carlisle Hart, Diane Sawyer, Diana Vreeland,

Jacqueline Bisset, Brooke Astor.

"Women are generally more interesting to interview than men," he says. "I have found women more open to talking, less defensive about everything. Maybe their emotions are more at the surface. With men, you sometimes have to make them angry before they'll really talk, really spill anything out."

Plaskin has been mentioned more than once in Liz Smith's nationally syndicated celebrity gossip column. He has had wonderful moments in his work, "like riding from Lutece to the Metropolitan Museum of Art with Jacqueline Onassis and her driver in her sedan." He has had less-than-wonderful moments, "like arriving at the White House to interview Nancy Reagan and discovering I'd left my contacts in New York and that my hair had static cling."

How he came to have such moments at all is a remarkable story highlighted by

what Plaskin calls "turning points" in a life that has always been unusual.

**B**orn and brought up in Western New York, where his parents, Anita Rauch and Albert Plaskin, and his maternal grandmother, Essie Feinberg, still live — he is a graduate of the Eggert Road Elementary School and Amherst junior and senior high schools.

But the childhood he remembers is mainly a childhood at the piano, something he emphasizes that he, not his parents, chose.

"My real inspiration," he once said, "was a friend, Mark Dubin. When he was 7 and I was 8, we were both taking piano lessons. His little fingers seemed to fly. I wanted mine to do that, too."

Plaskin's musical career — both in the Buffalo area and elsewhere — was salient. His teachers here included Evelyn Shine of Amherst; August Martin of Kenmore; Ronald

Peters, one of the Associates of the University of the Music of the Americas. The summer he spent studying in Zaragoza, Spain, before the National Interlochen, N.Y.

His solo performances were always local media. News' late critic, John Plaskin's 1972: "Just sonatine and implies an hension of and the ir voices." Th Trotter v "Pianist Pl of a sensitv perament." "There is ment and elegance in Glenn Plask

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