





But the better half of my mind said: "Are you kidding?" or words to that effect.

The truth is that there are far more reasons for not boring anybody with a written account of your life, than there are reasons for doing so. For a start, if the details of my life are too uncomfortable for me to take five minutes a week and record them in a pocket diary, then how will I manage the spiritual strength (or whatever) to write long turgid accounts of endless miseries, grievances, and other trivia, which I only write because I "don't know when I am well off"? Why not write another story instead? Why not turn out another fanzine?

Think of the horror involved in writing a diary of the last few months: a return to school after six weeks holidays and three weeks writing, full of good resolutions, things-will-go-right-this-year, fitted out in body and mind. Yet by the end of the term I retired wounded, licked, and begging my parents to let me get out of teaching. (I am still on the "bond", which, as you may know, binds a teacher who did his training with the Education Department to teach for three years. A sensible system, in theory, especially as the Department pays a good allowance to teachers-in-training, but what if they've picked the wrong person to serve out the three years...?) For all sorts of financial reasons, and mainly because I wanted to sit down to the non-lucrative job of writing, this manoeuvre did not pay off.

That's the biggest event of year, but do you really want to hear about it? Could you stand diary entry after diary entry which would alternate between depressing days and very depressing days?

There would be stories of peace, pleasure and profit, as well. Entries like "Saturday, 11th April, 1970: Saw EASY RIDER and ZABRISKIE POINT in one day, and also met Leigh Edmonds, etc, at the Club". Where in that can I convey the sheer elation of seeing two films that are superficially similar, but form two sides of one argument, complement each other superbly? The use of magnificent pop music in both, the slow soaring symbols of ZABRISKIE POINT, the laconic wit of both films, the breathtaking decline-and-explosion of the whole Western world in the last ten minutes of ZABRISKIE POINT? How can a diary convey that?

Or: "Friday 1st May 1970: Typed out 2nd draft of NIGHT VOICES. Saturday 2nd May 1970: Typed out third draft of NIGHT VOICES. Monday, 4th May 1970: NIGHT VOICES sent to Aldiss; carbon copy sent to Harding." How can that convey the huge storm that blew through a whole weekend, where I could not even face school on the Friday, so sat down to type out the second draft of a story that had been around for nearly six months; how I nearly did not sleep at all on the Thursday night, but as the story unfolded on the typewriter, how sanity came back, and by the end of the Saturday, the world looked habitable again. You can write about it, but it doesn't convey anything. Who cares if the story does not sell, but ends up here in METAPHYSICAL REVIEW? At least it was some indication that I could do something, compared with the constant feeling of ineffectiveness that binds most aspects of my life.

Why do people have to remain clerks or teachers or journalists when all they want to do is write? Why can't people have financial freedom to <sup>do</sup> certain things that are far more worthwhile than other things? How do you stop being a slave, except by starving? Will a disinclination to starve stop me writing? What possible effect will three years of hell have on the linings of the stomach, let alone on the sensitivity centres of the brain? "Man is born free, but everywhere remains in chains". Good old Rousseau - melodramatic to the last.

Now do you see why you must never let me fill up pages of METREV with my diary? Happenings dissolve into emotions, and those emotions must remain merely embarrassing for those who are forced to observe them. The diarist turns himself

into a masochist, and forces his readers to be voyeurs.

The effect can particularly be seen when reading old diaries. In those days (was it as early as fourth grade at primary school?) the idea of a notebook diary was to preserve scraps of events so that they would bring back the full memory when re-read. Little does the childish diarist know that the only impressions he may summon up are those of embarrassment, and horror at the miseries of childhood which those processes the psychologists describe, have so carefully erased.

For instance, I remember 1963 as a particularly good year, when I remember it as one complete impression. Fifth form; first year at Bacchus Marsh High School, which immediately seemed much better than the school I had previously attended; good subjects; ATLAS SHRUGGED. But even the slightest perusal of my diary for that year reveals the problems of trying to study properly for the first time, after having successfully avoided homework for all my previous life, the constant frustration of trying to do a subject I was very poor at (Art), and the recurrence of that feeling I still get quite often when I can't believe that things could be as bad as they are: that feeling that something "will turn up".

Or in 1964, my diary is covered with interesting quotations from all sorts of people (on science fiction, for me; the quotation at the beginning of THE PLAGUE: "It is as reasonable to represent one kind of imprisonment by another, as it is to represent anything that really exists by that which exists not"), lists of the tapes I made when I got my tape-recorder in about April (NINE TIMES OUT OF TEN - Cliff Richard; DO YOU WANNA DANCE - Cliff Richard; PRIDE GOES BEFORE A FALL - Jim Reeves; FROM ME TO YOU - Beatles; WE SAY YEAH - Beatles, etc), and some apocalyptic ideas for s f stories that were never written. Now I put all that guff in fanzines. In 1964, I suspect that the diary syndrome works the opposite way. I remember 1964 mainly for the grind of Matriculation, my constant belief that I was not going to pass, and the consequent fear that I would not make University.

But when I look at some of the early entries for the year, I find an entry for Wednesday, 8th January, 1964, which says, hieroglyphically: "Mum going for Jeanette at Ballan; took us along to Lerderderg. Finally found Rick, John W and a Robt McMurray at their camp. They got their Matric results from us (had no watch, paper, etc)." Again, that scrap does not mean much, except that it was one of the more pleasant days in my life. The Lerderderg River runs through Bacchus Marsh, but further up in the hills it becomes a gorge in which many hikers have become lost. At the bottom of the gorge is a very rough car park, and a small path goes along one side of the river/gorge. We had only gone for the day, and knew that my friends from Sunshine were somewhere up the gorge. They proved to be over one side of the river, complete with tent, canned goods, .... and no watch or newspapers. Their Matriculation results came out the day we went up there, so amongst general hiking and carrying-on, we were useful as well. I haven't seen the "John W" mentioned for a number of years - I believe he is now a prosperous primary school teacher living on the other side of Melbourne. I've never seen the "Robert McMurray" again, but the "Rick" mentioned will get a copy of this magazine. And will he cringe before my diary entries!

But that was a pleasant event in a year in which I was already weeks behind in my work by Easter, and eventually became about six months behind in at least one subject. The diary resolves often into a series of subjects done, and the homework in each.

Another good reason for not writing a diary is the things that could not be said in a printed diary, things which perhaps would not even make a private diary. I feel now that there is an underground of emotional development that took place

during the years I wrote diaries (which was itself perhaps the reason why I wrote diaries) that is entirely unrecorded. There are the obvious absences - the very few friends mentioned, the almost complete lack of "social life", the absence of inquiry about matters which perhaps I should have thought about then, and so not have suffered the consequences now. For instance, from about third form, there is the (unsaid) certainty that I was going to the University and would then teach. Which, unfortunately, I did. In Matriculation, there was the striving for minimum marks, which meant that I did not do well in Matric, and so did not try for Honours at University. An Honours degree would be very useful at the moment.

And, if we get back to the inquiry that started off this article: will I bore readers with yet another diary?" Perhaps most of all for the last reason, the question might be "yes". The matters that have always engaged most of my emotional attention have not been the day-to-day details, which I have always tried to ignore wherever possible, but the books, records and films in my life. I can still remember, in 1962, listening to one station for a whole day just to hear the late Roy Orbison record (IN DREAMS) which that station had just received. My devotion to Roy Orbison was seemingly complete, so that I could play his records endlessly, and it was only Orbison that could ever draw me to a Festival Hall pop concert. For what mad reason did I put Roy Orbison's birthday in large letters in one of my very early diaries?

Some how, that is the centre of the thing - the most important events were those that are now almost forgotten. At least the memory of the emotion remains, but not that intense emotion itself. Now other intense impressions have taken their place, which I know will fade, but that does not make them any less intense at the moment. And yet, for a diary to convey something, it is those private emotions that must be described to fill in the picture, but it is precisely those feelings that the reader will feel least in sympathy with.

Take today, for instance. Saturday, 23rd May, 1970, sandwiched inbetween Friday 22nd May, 1970, which was hellish (and at the end of the first week of term!) and Sunday 24th May, 1970. I have two fanzines to write in a fairly short time, and the best I can hope to do is to finish METREV, since the Harry Warner article is very long, and there are several good letters I want to print. But then Monday must come around. Now Mondayitis is a common enough complaint. But if I write about Monday from the point of view of "Don't-we-all-know-what-Monday-is-like" then I've probably wasted a stencil, because you all know what Monday is like. But if I write about Mondayitis from my peculiar viewpoint, then I am going to depress you even more than you would be depressed anyway, since I would give my impression that I am suffering a Monday that I would not need to suffer if only things had worked out better. Imagine the enjoyment of writing three thousand interesting (to me) words every day, instead of spouting (uncountable) sterile words in a classroom, and directing several hundred boys who will (a) learn, whatever I do, or (b) not learn, again whatever I do. The prison bars stretch in all directions, and all the time I feel that there is some key, that there have been keys there all the time, just waiting to be turned, but never discovered. Whatever form the shadows of inhibition and ignorance take, they best obscure the parts of the memory that might observe the experience and discover some way out.

So, one day, I might start to write a diary. Then you will know some equilibrium has been reached, that some angle of attack has been seen. Life won't be going too well - that would make it uninteresting to both diarist and reader; but at least it won't be grinding into pieces, as it is now.

But in the meantime, of course, I would like to read your diary.

## WELCOME LEE HARDING

Under present rules, I'm not sure if Lee Harding comes into the apa this mailing or next, but whenever it is, I don't think we will be disappointed. Some ANZAPA members may not realize that Lee, under his own name and pen-names was, with John Bangsund and John Foyster, a mainstay of AUSTRALIAN S F REVIEW for at least its first year of publication, and that he wrote some of the best things that ever appeared there. He's a busy man, and I did not really expect to see any more fannish work from Lee, but... well, maybe the projected World Convention has done one invaluable service already. Let's make it worthwhile for people like Lee to join the apa.

## NOT SO MUCH OF THE HAND-WRINGING THERE, BOY

The cri de coeur contains probably more cri than coeur; as I said, it was inspired by some of the very interesting fan diaries that have appeared recently, and I may yet start a purely fan diary in SFC, since such a vast amount of activity is going on at the moment. The other inspiration was my reading of the second part of Marcel Proust's REMEMBRANCE OF THINGS PAST recently. Proust's "thing" is, if you remember, that he has an incredible ability to reach back and recapture the feeling of the past as he felt it then, and to compare those feelings with his mature analysis and penetrating philosophical speculations. Pretty heady stuff, especially after reading the s f magazines of 1969 during the previous two months. The only event in which depression really did affect my judgment was, I think, the Easter Convention, and perhaps I should apologize for the sour impression of it I gave in SFC 11. I wasn't able to relax then at all, although during the recent school term holidays I had a great time, thanks to Lee Harding (again) who entertained Leigh Edmonds and me one day, and to David Grigg; who called the MUSFA meeting.

## WATCH FOR IT

Those readers who still have John Foyster's lists of favourite books from recent years should pay attention to them. On the first day that I met John Bangsund, he told me that he and Foyster regarded MAGISTER LUDI (subtitled THE BEAD GAME) as one of the best books around, and, if you called it s f, the best s f book ever written. It is set in a future time, but I don't think you could call it science fiction. Having just finished it, I'm not at all sure what to call it. All I know is that you should read it if you can buy it (Ungar paperback edition at \$3.95; or a new hardback edition entitled THE MAGICAL BEAD GAME which Berdie Bernhouse has had in at the Club for months) and that for some unaccountable reason it is a favourite of the American hippies. Superficially, the book is about mysticism, but in a most unusual way, covers the whole range of human aspirations, and I would have thought that its most pointed ironies would make all social escapees very uncomfortable.

## THE WORLDCON JIVE

For some reason best known to themselves, the 1975 World S F Convention Bidding Committee has asked Bob Smith and me to join them (Bob Smith is an obvious choice, but me....?). There will probably be a more official report soon, but from my own viewpoint it looks as if things are moving, even though I haven't settled into the routine yet. A lot of advertisements must go into a lot of sources fairly soon, so I would ask that if any non-Committee-members have striking ideas for ads, that they send those ideas to John Foyster. He's doing pretty well, but somebody trained in public relations could probably help us out on this. Meanwhile Gary Mason probably needs your money for AUSTRALIA IN SEVENTY-FIVE and to pay for all these ads. Ask a Committee member if you want more information.



you a Communist?" " Yeah, believe it or not, Ripley. I countered: "Do you think everyone who reads books is a Communist?" She didn't say any more... She had her suspicions. I'd hate to give these country folks a rope. You see, it wouldn't be deserving people like politicians and atomic physicists they'd hang, but everyone they suspected of being something they'd been taught to hate. The irony is that I dislike Communism as much as I dislike any other religion. I once had the foolish notion that television would be a source of enlightenment for the masses. Not so. It just reinforces their prejudices. Well, there's another good reason to object to taxation.

\*\*\*brg\*\* Somebody else in a black mood? Is there anybody fannish in a good mood?  
Noel? Lee? Harry? \*\*\*

ALF VAN DER POORTEN

(February 28, 1970)

40 Shackel Ave  
Clovelly  
N S W 2031

I appreciated receiving your bit from the ANZAPA mailing. Your list of last year's favourite reading was fascinating. With no attempt at ordering, my favourite s f of the last year or so would include:

John Boyd: THE LAST STARSHIP FROM EARTH  
Edmund Cooper: A FAR SUNSET  
ALL FOOL'S DAY  
Chloe Zerwick & Harrison Brown: THE CASSIOPEIA AFFAIR  
Lloyd Biggle Jr: THE STILL SMALL VOICE OF TRUMPETS  
Philip K Dick: CLANS OF THE ALPHANE MOON  
Harry Harrison: THE TECHNICOLOR TIME MACHINE  
James White: THE WATCH BELOW  
Piers Anthony: SOS THE ROPE.

At least, these spring to mind quickly. More general reading would be much more difficult. I'd have to mention:

Michael Frayn: THE TIN MEN  
THE BOOK OF FUB  
W S Baring-Gould: THE LURE OF THE LIMERICK  
Mordecai Richler: COCKSURE  
Len Deighton: ONLY WHEN I LARF  
Gore Vidal: JULIAN  
Ian Jeffries: IT WASN'T ME  
H H Kirst: THE NIGHT OF THE GENERALS  
Honor Tracy: THE STRAIGHT AND NARROW PATH  
Richard Condon: THE MANCHURIAN CANDIDATE  
ANY GOD WILL DO  
THE GREAT COWBOY RACE

For me the discovery of the year was Richard Condon. Beyond the sort of reading indicated above, my interest was confined to dryer material in Philosophy and Mathematics about which it is difficult to become too excited, although the first publication of Arhn's notes on ALGEBRAIC NUMBERS AND ALGEBRAIC FUNCTIONS and the appearance of Weiss' book on COSMOLOGY OF GROUPS were both landmarks.

\*\*\*brg\*\* More books for the collection - and I haven't even worked through John Foyster's list yet. For that matter, I haven't read half the books Harding lent me. Oh well. David Penman will probably read them all. (see later in this issue). Keep sending comments, Alf. \*\*\*

STUART LESLIE

(March 6, 1970)

59 Mary St  
Longueville  
N S W 2066

Personally I find your lists enjoyable, and admit it openly. Always interesting to compare one's tastes with another's. The books, being restricted to personal reading, are hard to comment on, but you

may have persuaded me to have another crack at James; perhaps not a confession one should make, considering his literary status, but I have always found him to be boring and tedious to the point of unreadability.

On films, I find you have excellent and discriminating taste - your choices being exactly what mine would have been if I were asked to make a list. Glad to find someone else who even saw, let alone liked THE PARTY. Sellers' acting is brilliant, his observation of nuances and idiosyncracies microscopic and astonishing, never lapsing for a second.

It seems that I am the only person in Australia who preferred Credence Clearwater's version of PROUD MARY. I did not think much of ATLANTIS but loved Donovan's BARABAJAGAL which suffered, as did most of the best records, from the ignorance of the stations and their mindless catering to the worst tastes of the teenieboppers. How could Johnny Farnham sell so well with his painstaking copies of overseas versions if the records were not being sold for their symbolic value - because Farnham is a sex symbol. His records certainly have no merit of their own. I think that you have missed a couple of really good Australian singles: DEAR PRUDENCE (Doug Parkinson In Focus), and MR GUY FAWKES (Dave Miller set); both brilliant so that I was astonished to learn that they were Australian - which does not say much for the average quality pop. You have missed the point on the performers "churning out one or two good songs a year". The release of singles is entirely up the record companies. Many of these artists have some phenomenal music on Album release, and album tracks are seldom played for the pop audience either because they are too long or "not commercial" i.e. they have not got ridiculously simple tunes that may be picked up at one hearing. Some other non-releases are arbitrary and incomprehensible; much by, for instance, Cream or Simon and Garfunkel is as good as or better than the commercial songs of theirs that have sold well as singles.

What! No word about the Beatles??? Shame!!! I hereby categorically and dogmatically state that ABBEY ROAD is - not, in my opinion, but, is - their best Album ever. Yes, better than SERGEANT PEPPER'S; technically, lyrically and musically (also satirically).

In reference to (a) Bernie's letter, and (b) your attribution to me of the idea of a "modern mythology": It was not me who said that. I just happened to be there at the time. In fact, I denied it. This is the sort of thing that people seize on to try to justify some infantility or irrationality; the sort of thing one wishes could be true. I think the idea was more or less parroted from Stan Lee, Marvel's editor. In view of psychological investigation into the roots of mythology I think the idea is completely untenable. I would like to be able to explain my liking for comics in this way, but honesty forbids me and, shame-facedly, I must admit that the only reason I can offer is pure childish escapism. Comics are only a mild interest for me, but I do derive some pleasure from the better ones amongst them. Perhaps it has something to do with the fact that I have almost no artistic talent, yet I have always longed to express myself visually; indeed, among all the arts, painting and sculpture exert the strongest hold over me. Although one could never call comics capital A Art, it is undeniable that there are some highly skilled and expressive draughtsmen there who fulfill

their limited objectives very well: to communicate their fantasies with the maximum of dramatic and/or comic impact. But I can still offer no better reason than atavistic fantasy or wish-fulfillment.

When is Stuart Leslie going to join ANZAPA? Good question. When is Stuart Leslie going to get off his bum and do anything constructive? What he needs is a good swift kick. Time was, he was an angry young man; come to think of it he still is - but a much more cynical one. Yes, time was... he wrote pages and pages of poetry, essays, letters of protest... Now he sits and thinks... stews... fumes: pollution, overpopulation, political idiocy and infantility, bureaucratic hypocrisy, religious dogmatism, causes of man's insanity... futile wars... hate, hate..... but in his anger he procrastinates. Bernie, you sound like me. You write what and how I would, used to, should, write. Despite my professed profession as an actor, somehow, in here somewhere, I have long felt it my - if not manifest, at least ordained or potential - destiny to write. Perhaps I am a coward, afraid to try lest it become obvious that I can't. I have doubts as to my ability as an actor; if I find that I cannot write either.... One does not want to recognize oneself as a total failure. I lack dedication, you see, something which actors are supposed to possess in large amounts. To me acting is a secondary art - an interpretation of someone else's creation; you are not creating out of your own inner life but assuming another role or identity already created in large measure. As art, this to me is cheating, but perhaps I am too much the idealist....

Of course one may rail at society, about being a misfit, at the existential dilemma - but Colin Wilson's OUTSIDER is a cop-out. Last year while not working I spent a week writing. The result was page after foolscap page of random notes, quotes, thoughts and jottings stimulated by and derived from diverse sources: R D Laing; THE POLITICS OF EXPERIENCE, THE DIVIDED SELF; Palinurus: THE UNQUIET GRAVE; Alex Comfort: NATURE AND HUMAN NATURE; Pascal: PENSEES; Saint-Exupery; Sartre and Existentialism; Russell; Jung; Herbert Read; Susanne K Langer, etc, etc. Art, life, neurosis, war, death, "la condition humaine", creation.... No doubt there is much there which could be elaborated and developed into essays, articles and so on. I would not know really; I have not had the courage to re-read the stuff!

I have no confidence in my critical ability. Maybe I never delve into anything deeply enough. I find the world so full of a number of incredible and fascinating things that I will never read or investigate the multiplicity I would wish. So I skip from subject to subject, experience to experience, in some mad Brownian motion. Which is not to say I do not pause to soak up the intoxicating experience of being and feeling, but there is so much in the world; and selfishly, or foolishly, I somehow want it all.

Enough of these confessions of frustrated and unrealised (or unrealisable) aspirations. One longs for that dream of the s f writer - the generalist, or syntheist who is supposed to sit around absorbing random knowledge, letting it boil around in the subconscious, and every now and then, when the Koestlerian matrices cross, produce the brilliant inspiration to solve the Great Problem which had baffled and confused all the narrow-minded specialists. Anyone for ANALOG ???

By the way, re. Bernie's apocalyptic dream-nightmare; if you want to find out how really bad, corrupt, hypocritical, insane, the conditions and government are in THE GREAT SOCIETY, read two publications: 1. If Messrs. Rylah, Bolte, etc, allow its sale in Victoria, RAMPARTS magazine, published by the Original Black Panthers (actually peaceful and constructive fellows - the violent ones being later, self-appointed revolutionary vandals); radical, intellectual, iconoclastic

and quite horrifying in its revelations, and 2. AMERICAN POWER AND THE NEW MANDARINS, by Noam Chomsky, a fully documented and infuriating account of American foreign policy, especially in Vietnam; a thorough-going criticism and indictment. Also radical, intellectual, and horrifying.

\*\*\*brg\*\* Needless to say, I gained considerable pleasure from this letter. Not that I've faced the same problems, because I've always been busy to even think about solving the world's problems. It's a case of the blind leading the blind as far as writing goes, but I'm always willing to look at anybody's work, and so are any of the pro writers we have in Australia. The main thing I've feared in writing is the form itself, but when I started writing stories again late last year, I found that I had been studying fiction from a writer's point-of-view for years and that the form came easiest, provided I concentrated on the structure of the story. I must send MAGISTER LUDI to you - or, since I don't really want to send it anywhere - just ask you to borrow it from a library. Hesse, in common with Eastern mystics, and, in different ways, all thinkers, sees art and knowledge as the reconciliation of opposites: the meeting of Ying and Yang, as he says several times. Not the finding of the Big Answer, but the correct and sophisticated formulation of the Big Questions. In MAGISTER LUDI, the main metaphor is that of music, and especially that of Bach, whose most original pieces are also his most formal. In short stories, the form comes from Chekhov, Turgenev, Maupassant, Joyce, Mansfield, and others who lived about the same time. Very few short stories, then, have been written in science fiction, as most s f stories are just series of events, not the collection of conflicts at one point in time. The balancing of conflicts, the formulation of human problems - well, it can be done, as long as one knows what to do. The problem with s f is that most of its writers have no idea of what a good story is, so if they write one, it is mainly by accident.

But the call to discipline rather than random scribbles is an easy one to make. I've found random notes for fanzines, as well as the articles, have helped me as much as anything else. If ya gotta scribble, then ya scribble. And if you've got to make money from writing (which is the real problem; a commercially successful writer is still a success, even if he can hardly sign his name, because he's doing better than 90% of Australian writers) then that alters all the propositions. The best thing George Turner has told me is that you can't break the rules until you know them.

Personally I find it very easy to do something - but Hamlet's problem (no, not this Oedipus complex) is just as pressing as it was then.

Other matters: the Beatles always have bored me, except in some of their better rock 'n' roll numbers. My favorite Beatles record is LONG TALL SALLY, with some of tracks from BEATLES FOR SALE (BEATLES '65 in the USA) running second. I am extremely grateful to the Beatles for breaking through American and dj prejudices, and letting the really good groups of 65-66, such as the Rolling Stones and the Animals, get a go. Likewise, all the post-SGT. PEPPERS albums were much better, but would not have been made without the Beatles' green light. I now hope that the Stones do not follow the green light as far as breaking-up goes. I usually judge a pop group by its drummer and instrumentalists, and therefore I find the Beatles consistently mediocre. A propos another note in your letter: Paul McCartney did most of the drums on ABBEY ROAD, so I've heard.

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\*\*\*brg\*\* Another, later letter from Stuart, in which he states that he did not write the last letter specifically for publication. But he doesn't know much about fanzine editors, does he? He also appreciated Stanislaw Lem in SFC 9 - you certainly know how to make friends with me, Stuart.

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If you are crapped off with the conditions under which you live, you must get out. Perhaps your relations with your parents are different from mine. I was living away from home for over a year myself, but having achieved some degree of maturity I find living with them actually gives me greater freedom than I had otherwise; I suppose I have unusually liberal, tolerant and understanding parents, but I understand your dilemma. Opting out is all very well but if one is used to some measure of security it is a daunting and difficult prospect to face exchanging it for a large measure of uncertainty; uncertainty that could force you, through the necessity of food, shelter, clothing, etc., into the position of having even less self-determination than before. Idealistic heads usually have little effect on entrenched stone walls (stone heads?) of authority. But best of luck in your search for a solution. I live a very pleasant existence with a minimum of problems - external ones, anyway - and have, thank God, no large impositions on my time. Time! That is the crux of the whole problem, n'est-ce pas? At the moment I "work" about three hours a night, the rest of the time my own. The inverted commas around work are there because I do not consider doing what you really want to do any form of labour, no matter what the internal struggles. I do not earn much money, but it is sufficient to support my major needs, the greatest of which is Time: Time to work out my own problems, my own life, in my own way. And I do not take this for granted; I really appreciate it. On the whole I suppose I have had an easy life, but I have had my periods of drudgery, of "wage slavery" and those periods of incredibly dull and stultifyingly repetitious non-stimulation were almost unbearable. Ah freedom!

\*\*\*brg\*\* More encouragement, but... The problems are still financial. . An awful lot of writ rs don't sell anything for a long time, and there is no way to take the risk. And I am no actor. Anybody want to buy in on this discussion?

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PAUL ANDERSON

21 Mulga Rd  
Hawthorndene  
S A 5051

Last week I was away from work but was cheered up, to a degree, by the arrival of METREV 2. This lists are interesting but I disagree on several of the entries. My own non-s f book list would include:

E R Braithwaite: TO SIR WITH LOVE  
PAID SERVANT

These are a lot better than the film would indicate, as good as Poitier was in the film version of TO SIR WITH LOVE.

Lloyd Douglas: DR HUDSON'S SECRET JOURNAL  
MAGNIFICENT OBSESSION

Kurt Vonnegut Jr: THE SIRENS OF TITAN  
GOD BLESS YOU MR ROSEWATER.

Brian Aldiss: AN AGE.

These are the only ones that come readily to mind but no doubt I have inadvertently overlooked any number of other worthy contenders. I am about 30 or 40 pages into Cervantes' DON QUIXOTE which I started reading after seeing MAN OF LA MANCHA last year, but I lost interest after he was beaten up for the third time. I have

also read Conrad's THE SECRET AGENT, having studied it while doing Leaving Honours English some time ago. I was unimpressed by his style but whenever I read newspaper reports of unruly student demonstrations I think of Conrad's seedy "agent provocateur".

I agree with two of your list of 8 films, i.e. IF and THE PARTY. Other films that I consider well worth seeing are:

1. THE MADWOMAN OF CHAILLOT (Ely Landau). Katherine Hepburn was superb in this surrealistic rendition of Giraudoux' play.
2. THE BRAIN. I saw this film while I was in Sydney and it is even funnier than THE ITALIAN JOB.
3. OH WHAT A LOVELY WAR (Brian Duffy & Richard Attenborough).
4. CHARLY.
5. THE ODD COUPLE. This is one of the best films that Lemmon has made since SOME LIKE IT HOT.

\*\*\*brg\*\* Paul also talked about pop records in Adelaide, but the letter came some time ago, and some of the comments are out-dated. I've managed to miss all the best-reviewed films in Melbourne this year, but have still seen some very good ones, especially at Easter. \*\*\*

HARRY WARNER JR

423 Summit Ave  
Hagerstown  
Maryland 21740  
U S A

(March 25, 1970)

Let's see if I can remain awake long enough to send some comments on the second METAPHYSICAL REVIEW. It has been a trying day, which contained another of those last-ever episodes that cause a fellow to realize how old he's getting.

It was the last time I changed the licence tags on my car. The car is eleven years old, the tags are supposed to remain in use for five years, and obviously they won't require a replacement on that car; if I'm still alive five years from now, I probably won't own an auto at all, even if humanity in general hasn't come to realize by 1975 that it can't coexist on this planet with the automobile. Just a few weeks ago it was the last-ever for a near-total solar eclipse in Hagerstown. The next time the city lies in the path of such a near-totality, I'll have stopped writing locs permanently.

It's somewhat unsettling to see little we have in common on reading and watching experiences. I've read only two of the ten books on your list of the year's reading list, and saw none of the movies. If you think you're out of the mainstream of civilization in Australia, as your fanzines sometimes hint, you should try Hagerstown for a few days, no longer. The experiment wouldn't be worth the experience, if it required longer to convince you what it's really like in Hagerstown. But an invaluable paperback which lists statistics about some 8000 movies released for television in the United States tells the answer to one of your uncertainties. MY DARLING CLEMENTINE was in black and white, not colour.

George Turner's letter and your reply were intensely interesting. I am not so sure that reading all those old novels is such a chore and dull obligation. I was lucky in failing to get exposed to much obligatory reading of the 'classics' when I went to school; this seems to be an experience that permanently prejudices

so many people against anything written more than a half-century ago. (Note, as a parallel example, how today's rock groups so studiously avoid using any instrument that is involved in school music instruction and training.) I've read perhaps two-thirds of the items in George's list, and find his recommendations fairly good, although I would include a bit more fiction that did not get written in the British Isles. WERTHER or one of the Wilhelm Meister stories should certainly be there; I'd consider Zola more fitted than Dickens to be represented by four novels; and Faulkner really ought to be represented among the Americans, even if it means leaving out either AN AMERICAN TRAGEDY or STUDS LONIGAN, which are a trifle too similar for both to be included in such a small group of novels from this continent. Meeting your objections to the inadequacies of Dickens as a social force would be a Charles Reade novel; he wasn't nearly as great a writer, but he told things as they were at intervals between the long sections of hackneyed situations.

I've tried and tried to feel as outraged at comics and comic fans as my own interests and age demand. But I've not succeeded. I like comic fans and I find myself wishing that I hadn't been born a couple of years too soon; comic books became a big thing in this nation just at the time when I began to get an exalted opinion of my own tastes and I never bought and read anything but a few issues of FAMOUS FUNNIES, a reprint publication that is fabulously rare today. Comic books haven't produced anything remotely resembling the quality of good written science fiction. But I think a pretty good case could be made out for the equality of the better comic books and the worst science fiction. I'd rather read THE PHANTOM than a Palmer-edited AMAZING STORIES. There's no real reason why comic books couldn't eventually evolve into something important as an art form, just as movies did after a decade or longer of very mediocre false starts.

Alan Hutchison's essay probably wouldn't seem like anything special to a widely read Shakespearian scholar. But it is just right for me, who have always loved THE WINTER'S TALE as a reading experience and have almost given up all hope of ever seeing it in a live production, and know about it only the information contained in the variorum edition. A production was shown over the educational television network just before I finally got my set equipped with the UHF antenna needed to pick up member stations back here in the hills. The play seems from the printed page to have a very special atmosphere, different from other Shakespeare, a freedom from the all-out evil and dreadful tragedy and mighty semi-historical personages that turn up in all his other works. The characters are royalty only by the flimsiest of pretexts, and they work out quite human problems in much the same way that any civilized people would try to do. It's refreshing, and Alan's article seems to analyse quite well some of the ways in which this naturalness and humanity come across.

I can't remember if I mentioned this in a previous letter to you, but: I don't want to become a cause celebre in ANZAPA. I told Gary as much when he asked if I wanted the mailings enough for it to become an issue. I explained that they might become useful in my fan history project but I could do without them, and suggested that he himself might want to dump some old mailings off on me someday if they didn't sell elsewhere and were cluttering up the house too badly. Meanwhile I can get some idea of the organization's progress through an occasional issue of an ANZAPA publication by a few kind souls like you. I'm glad to know that it's coming along quite well, and I can imagine it doing more for Australian fandom than almost any other project. One of my pet theories is that FAPA was an infinitely stronger influence on American fandom for many years than anyone is willing to admit, as a testing ground for so many of the fannish writing and publishing habits that later influenced general fanzines and ways of thinking of non-members.

Your enthusiasm for Mahler is very gratifying. I feel as prophetic as all get out over the increased popularity of his music. A long while ago, when almost nobody ever played him, I predicted to another music-loving fan that Mahler would eventually become as popular as Tchaikowsky with better reason, as a composer who has much the same effect on music lovers and writes much better music to boot. But the other part of my prediction has gone astray somehow; I considered Ralph Vaughn Williams as the one person among all the then living composers with the best chance to attain permanent fame and all-out popularity. Maybe his time will yet come.

\*\*\*brg\*\* I think his time has very nearly come in Australia, where the ABC has played more and more of his music during recent years. Vaughn Williams' 9th Symphony is, more than any other single work, the one that hooked me onto Classical music when I was still wavering. (John Bangsund happened to play it the first time I was at his place). Andre Previn's new series of recordings of the complete symphonies (7, 6 and 8 are out so far) has stirred even more interest in Australia, and now Boult is re-recording all his own readings. The ABC seem to play one of the minor pieces (and especially THE LARK ASCENDING) every second week. Two other composers that have not yet caught on but sound magnificent to me are Nielsen and Honegger. Probably the least-played composer at the moment is still Sibelius, so I will just have to spend some money to buy all the symphonies. And I've promised myself one Mahler symphony every six months, with the 3rd next on my list.

You have not become a cause celebre, but were put to the vote, and, if I remember properly, not accepted as a semi-official member. Most people just don't want semi-official members, I think. Of course, if you would like to put HORIZONS through ANZAPA, as well as through FAPA..... ?

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DAVID PENMAN

(April 27, 1970)

"Goonderabbie"  
Walebing  
W A 6511

Dankas al vi, as we say in Esperanto, for No 2 of METAPHYSICAL REVIEW. Very much of it I felt was above my head but that list of books has proved very useful.

I typed it out, minus the ten odd I had read, and sent it home with a hint that this might solve certain birthday present problems. I intend to read the lot eventually, possibly by the end of this year. MADAME BOVARY was near the top of the list. The first parcel arrived a week ago with a dozen or so of the books and my Esperanto dictionary. I've already finished HENRY ESMOND and lent out three or four of the others.

It rained all through crutching (I don't suppose you know what crutching is, but you can find out). On the other hand, Ararat's somewhere in the country, isn't it? Anyway, it was a pretty miserable time, with us running up and down the paddocks trying to dry them out between showers. We've had pretty good weather since then; at least it was pretty good for those who have a functioning hot water system. I don't. I've just lit another fire in the stove to try and heat it up but it'll all probably dry out by tonight.

\*\*\*brg\*\* Your project of reading all those books by the end of this year makes my hair stand on end. For a start, you will have done about ten University courses (especially if you read other books by the authors George lists). Worse still, you will have read far more than me. David will be back from the outback soon, he says, No wonder. \*\*\*



distraction by thinking about my own piano, searching my memory to make certain that the piano-building industry had not been selling me a new piano every other year and immediately erasing from memory all recollection of the transaction, so the piano factory would continue to thrive. The piano that sits inside the front door was consolingly familiar, displaying the minor wounds that could have accumulated only through decades of minor engagements with vacuum cleaners and moving men. Then something occurred to me. I wandered through the house, looking at this and at that wornout piece of furniture and long outmoded small appliances. Unless I forgot to see something because of its very familiarity, my suspicion was confirmed. The piano is the oldest thing in this house from the standpoint of constant possession and regular use. There are a few older small pieces of furniture that came into the house of semi-antiques after long visits in other homes, but they took occupancy here later than the piano. Lots of small things packed away on the attic or cellar date further back in boyhood like some child's books, a couple of tiny rings, and my first watch, but I haven't touched or seen most of them for a long while.

The piano is showing its age. I haven't had it tuned for more than a year, as the neighbours must realize daily, and several notes have lost most of their power because of accidents in the mechanism. The tuner has been threatening to revolt, every time he must tinker with such ancient entrails of the piano, and I've been reluctant to call him, fearing that this will be the time that he diagnoses the beginning of the end. I frankly don't know what I'll do if he finds that there is no longer any hope. I'm not normally sentimental over old things - I keep lots of old things because I think I might want them again sometime, not because I sense a mystic aura of individuality about them. But the piano is something else again. It symbolizes so many things, it served as consolation and tranquilizer through so many difficult times; it's a part of memories of home through most of my life, and I feel toward this particular piano an affection greater than I've ever felt toward any pet.

One of the things that this piano symbolizes is an entirely different way of thinking about music and listening to music than today's attitude in both amateur and professional circles. I don't intend to get technical in this essay about musical matters, but I think it's obvious to almost everyone that today there's a greater stress than ever before on the sound of music, to the subordination of the music itself. Stupendous amounts of time are devoted to research, reconstruction, arguing, and experimenting, in efforts to present music of the old days just as it was performed when new. This passion has resulted in such phenomena as the resurrection of the harpsichord from the grave into which musicians had so happily dumped it around the end of the 18th century; at least a dozen different ways of performing THE MESSIAH, each guaranteed to be identical with the performance that Dubliners heard on a memorable day; the entire high fidelity movement with its obsession for reproducing just the sounds that went into the original recording; and publication of manuscript facsimile editions of great music, so the composer's own handwriting can be seen by any music lover or performer.

I wonder if all this could have occurred if there were still pianos in almost daily use in most of the homes of the nation? For the piano is the best guarantee that this authenticity complex won't take too strong control of a person living in that house. If the piano is there, and you can play it to some extent, it represents an irresistible temptation. You use it to try your hand at performing violin music, at playing piano arrangements of symphonies, at piecing together as best you can both the vocal and orchestral parts of an opera score, or perhaps just playing the sheet music edition of popular music, which everyone knows isn't meant to be played as such but rather to serve as the skeleton around which interpreters will rig up their own arrangements. It's customary these days to

marvel at the riches of the lp record catalogues, which provide fifty times the variety of repertoire and choice of interpretations that were available in the old 78 rpm record days. But even the Schwann catalogue's classical music section seems quite spartan and primitive, if compared with the contents of piano music catalogues. Today, publishers don't offer quite as much as they once did, because four-handed piano arrangements have been falling out of favour. But you can still find the most amazing quantities of long-forgotten good and bad music in piano arrangements even in domestic music catalogues, and if you can make arrangements to order from Europe, you're even dizzier, trying to decide what to choose from the enormous choice.

Now, obviously, a Beethoven symphony or a Verdi opera doesn't sound as good when I pound out an inadvertantly altered version from a piano arrangement, as it does when I go to a live performance of it or put out on the turntable the latest and best recording. But the important factor is that I like to play this music on the piano, it doesn't spoil my enjoyment of it when I hear it approximately as the composer intended it to sound in the concert hall or theatre, and I think that this is a very important matter indeed, one that has a relationship to much smaller deviations between the composer's intent and performer's interpretation. Music is tough if it's good. You can't break a masterpiece if you play it on the wrong instrument or interpolate wrong notes into the performance or play just part of it or pace it at the wrong speed or adopt mannerisms that should be reserved for music of another nation or a different century. If your enjoyment of a piece of music is permanently spoiled because you heard someone play it badly or wrongly, then that was a bad piece of music to begin with. I'm speaking of classical music because I know it best, but I think that the same principle holds good in other fields. There is something terribly sick about the authenticity school, whether it emphasizes the right ornaments in Couperin's harpsichord music or insists that a white man can't write or sing the blues. All through the known history of music, right down to these recent years when the obsession with authentic performances boiled up, composers showed no hesitancy about monkeying with the original composition, whether their own or someone else's. Bach was a constant transcriber, sometimes revising an old work, on other occasions simply adapting it for a different purpose. There's not a shred of evidence that much pre-Bach music was intended for any particular group of instruments or voices, and sometimes when the composer did utter a few words about how it should be played, he was quite cool about it, suggesting rather than ordering, often listing alternatives. Just imagine the horror that would be aroused today if a pianist played an arrangement of Beethoven's violin concerto, assuming one thing: that Beethoven himself hadn't published a quite good transcription of that very nature.

The piano in the house helped to democratize music, to make it something suitable for anyone to perform, no matter what particular form the composer had happened to write it in. Today the trend is the other way: to striving for performing old music in ways that hardly anyone can achieve but well-heeled specialists, and then the recording companies spend fortunes setting up equipment in some spot or other that is supposed to reflect the acoustical properties that the composer meant for the composition, and when only a thousand copies or so are sold, the manufacturers scream that good music won't sell.

Of course, the strictly sic school is pursuing an impossible goal, and simultaneously is awfully hypocritical about it. A recent issue of HIGH FIDELITY magazine goes on and on about a Telefunken release of Bach cantatas, raving: "The recent tremendous surge of interest in authentic readings has produced several ensembles who specialize in performing baroque music in as stylistically accurate a manner as possible." This is downright hogwash. The statement implies that there are no choirboys in Europe, because the release in question assigns the

soprano and alto parts in the chorus to women. Bach never wrote for women's voices when he wrote cantatas, and the differences between women and boys in performances is infinitely greater than between recorders and flutes, for example, in the orchestral parts. Briefly: Nobody can possibly know how music was performed in the times more than a century distant from us (and there is a lot of doubt about more recent times, as you'll learn if you listen to some musicians argue whether Paderewski or Rosenthal records accurately reflect the way he played in concert). The people who wrote about how to perform ornaments contradict one another hopelessly. It's impossible to know how fast music was performed in the past (but there are some good reasons for believing that Bach played his own works at a speed that would seem hysterically rapid to us today). And for all their claims to research and piety, today's reconstructors of old performance styles do a lot of arbitrary emphasizing and soft-pedalling. They never seem willing to use the Scotch snap that we know was adopted for certain works at one time, a sort of primitive syncopation, and they ignore studiously the very obvious statements that it was quite customary in some times and places to slow down the speed just before the end. Stokowski does it, but Stokowski is in disgrace because he transcribes Bach's music almost as frequently as Bach did, and so the authentic musicians will have none of it. The very keystone of the 18th century imitations, the harpsichord, is misused today. Modern harpsichords are louder than their old originals and their tones are frequently amplified still more by microphone placement in recordings. The harpsichord must have been next to inaudible in most 18th century music-making, except to other musicians who happened to be nearest to it; witness the way its bass notes required doubling by a cello or bassoon, and the lack of concertoes for harpsichord.

All this would be harmless dressing up in old costumes by the performers, since I've already explained that good music isn't damaged by the way it's performed. But I'm afraid that the whole outlook on music is helping to strengthen whatever trend exists against daily use of the piano by amateurs in homes. It must be hard for a youngster brought up on a diet of today's musical reconstructions to sit down and play on his piano anything except the tiny fraction of one per cent of the entire repertoire that was originally written for the piano.

I first saw my piano on the eve of my tenth birthday. Until then, my only chance to touch a piano had come in my Aunt Bess' home, where I was allowed to practise tone clusters and aleatory interpretations if I didn't drown out the conversations too often. For a previous birthday or Christmas, I'd been given a toy piano, one that looked startlingly like Schroeder's. I had the advantage of possessing one more finger on each hand than Schroeder, but he apparently had black keys on his piano, and my toy instrument didn't. There were just painted black keys on the white ones. Somewhere or other, I learned how to read treble staff music, and I used to pick out on the two-octave piano with my right hand the melodies on a stack of old sheet music that had belonged to my father when he was messing around with dance orchestras. When I came to a note that should be played on a black key, I pressed both of the white keys on which the black key was painted, and doggoned if I didn't hear that tone, instead of the major second that should have been audible. I don't know how long I had the toy piano, but it was long enough to give my right hand an advantage in agility over and beyond the edge it possessed over my left hand by reason of the fact that I'm naturally righthanded. My left hand has never caught up completely, after all these years of real piano-playing.

My parents bought me the piano from Professor Carl, who lived in apartments near the candy store where my father was book-keeper. It came on a cold December afternoon, and its arrival taught me one of the first great lessons in patience in my young life. The moving men warned that the piano shouldn't be played

until it warmed up, and the next couple of hours were absolute horrors of frustrated desire for me. I'd done some research into the subject of full-scale pianos and had learned that they are customarily played with two hands, not just one, and that music for these two hands utilizes a mysterious device called the bass clef which destroys all you've laboriously learned about where a note on a given line or space of the staff belongs on the keyboard. From somewhere or other, I'd come up with a flimsy little folder of songs arranged for the most primitive sort of pianists; somehow, I have the notion that it was the instruction leaflet prepared for a larger toy piano than the one I'd grown to love. By meal time that evening, I'd succeeded in playing with both hands. The first achievement was YANKEE DOODLE, its melody performed in eighth notes by the right hand while the left hand performed half-notes as a simple harmonic underpinning. That began an affair with that piano which hasn't ended yet, unless nature takes its course with either the piano or me before you read this magazine. My father knew what sort of coaching provoked the best response in me, and helped me to discover things about piano technique for myself, instead of sending me to a piano teacher. It wasn't the procedure that produces a concert pianist, and I didn't have the temperament for that kind of livelihood, anyway, but it did not make learning the piano seem to be a chore or an unpleasantness to be freed from as soon as possible.

Maybe I had more ability or desire to learn to play the piano than most people. But I'm more inclined to believe that I was lucky enough to blunder into the proper way of learning to love the piano and to gain a non-professional amount of skill on it. So I really find it impossible to believe that some people experience such enormous amounts of trouble with piano lessons. Unless an individual has an abnormal hand or some impediment in the joints of his fingers and wrists, I can't believe that learning to play the piano is difficult enough to prevent any child or adult from doing it with little or no help in his spare time. If my theory is correct, there's no real need for the expedients that have been developed, mostly in the form of organs where you play the tune with one finger and press buttons with another to provide harmonies. It's something like use of the typewriter: there's not the least reason why people shouldn't learn to use the touch system instead of the hunt-and-peck method. Maybe the situation is akin to the way people drive down to the corner drugstore instead of walking a half-block: it's socially demeaning to walk or to play a piano the traditional way or to type like a lowly stenographer when you can pretend you are too busy a person, too concerned with the important things in life to acquire and utilize the plebeian skills requiring motions of the feet or fingers. Or maybe there's a deep-seated desire in people to get into the late stages of the 20th century, rather than dawdling in the pre-automated past ways.

And yet, some people are still giving their kids piano lessons. Asher Edelman got tired of teaching first grade five-finger exercises last year, after about forty years of it, announced his retirement, and the effect on Hagerstown was much worse than when a doctor drops dead without selling his practice first. There just aren't enough piano teachers to absorb the children left musical orphans by Asher's decision. His teaching wasn't as hectic at the end as it had been a few years back, when he ran things on an assembly line basis with class instruction, fines for any youngster who didn't show up, and recitals every spring that topped any Wagner opera for duration. But Asher told me that he was still kept extremely busy, didn't know how a lot of the kids would continue their piano studies, and seemed regretful when I pointed out to him that he might have solved everything by advertising in one of the musical journals for a teacher to come to Hagerstown to take over.

And yet, most of the Hagerstown homes that I get into are pianoless. The going price for a used piano seems to be around \$25 to \$50, if it's in good condition and is something less than a Steinway grand. The union rescue mission won't

accept pianos at all for its second-hand store, because they take up too much space and never sell. Two Hagerstown stores sell pianos, but I doubt that they do a rush business in them. Tentatively, I've decided that the piano lessons go to kids who live in homes that are big or date far enough back to have pianos surviving from an earlier epoch. This leaves unsolved the mystery of who buys all the newly manufactured pianos, in Hagerstown and elsewhere. Institutions account for a lot of the sales, I assume, and this brings me to another point: I imagine that there must be an awful lot of residents of the United States, kids and younger persons for the most part, who are almost totally unaware of how a piano sounds in a home. They hear pianos played in Sunday School, in the concert hall, before and after school assemblies, on phonograph records, over the radio, and in a set of other circumstances. With all respect to Carnegie Hall, I can't believe that the piano is as impressive anywhere as in the home. Visually, it dominates the house, unless it's one of these unspeakable little "spinet" models: it's often the biggest single object in the house, if the wife and mother has watched her diet and the garage is a separate building. From the sound standpoint, there is an enormous difference between listening to a piano played in a home-sized room and hearing one in a large hall or via a recording. Even if the decibels are equal, there's all the world of intimacy in a very softly played passage when you are three feet from the piano and when you are in the thirtieth row in the auditorium. No matter how loudly a piano may be played in a public place, it won't have quite the effect on the listener that a fortissimo achieves when the reverberations come from walls only a few feet away. The stupendous variety of tones that can be obtained on a piano tend to get lost and to merge into one another, if there's too much air space and echoing reverberation from distant walls or the noise a silent audience makes. I don't for a minute believe in the ancient fable about the "touch" of great pianists: a clumsy child could produce a single tone from a piano that nobody could distinguish from the same note struck by a genius. But what some musicians insist is the result of a certain way of depressing the keys is actually a combination of a whole batch of variables: relative loudness of various notes struck simultaneously, pedal use, imperceptible liberties with the rhythm, gradations in how legato or staccato the progression of notes becomes, and even the slight differences of timbre produced by the surroundings which may absorb more sound from notes in one part of the keyboard than another. I hope that this situation, the unique effect of a piano in a small surrounding area, is at least part of the reason why I'd rather play a composition badly than listen to it played well in recital. I prefer the sound of the piano and the way I can vary it in my home.

Then there's another advantage to do-it-yourselfness with the piano in the privacy of your own home. You can learn to love a lot of bad music. In recent years, good music has been driving out bad music over the air and on records and for all I know in studios of piano teachers, perhaps. Yet bad music has always had at least a hundred-to-one numerical superiority over good music in publishers' catalogues. I have an uneasy feeling that in another half-century, all the bad piano music will be out of print and whatever amateur pianists may exist in that future era may never know the advantages of bad piano compositions. Only a few libraries may own the works of Leybach, Durand and a thousand other hacks who composed prodigious quantities of inferior piano music. It's not worth listening to, but it's enormous fun to play for several reasons. Gymnastic considerations, for instance: there's no real relationship between music that is a masterpiece and music that fingers enjoy performing. The HAMMENKLAVIER Sonata is the most famous example of superb music that goes every which way except the way the fingers like to travel. On the other hand, THE TWO LARKS would never be considered as great music from any standpoint, but playing it is as much fun for the knuckles and ligaments as a walk through a polecat-free woods on a brisk fall day is for the legs and lungs. So much of this bad music from the great days of the piano's popularity seems to grow out of the very mechanical nature of the musical

instrument, sounds much harder than it really is (normally, the reason the composer wrote it at all!) and doesn't usually leave any residue of obsessive melody fragments running through the mind for hours later like many compositions which are somewhat higher on the artistic scale.

But there's another advantage to bad piano music. It demonstrates so clearly the way in which quality differs in music and, for instance, fiction. You can read through a bad novel by a hack writer without finding in it a line, an episode, a bit of characterization that has the least tinge of novelty or individuality or memorableness. You can usually be sure if a long work of fiction is good and written by a real artist after you've read just a page or two of it. But musical compositions don't work that way. The vast bulk of all the measures written by Mozart or Bach aren't better than most of the measures written by the third-rate composers. And in most bad pieces of music, there are at least a couple of bars, or perhaps just one cadence, that sticks marvellously in the mind as a stroke of genius. The differences between the good and the bad compositions lie in the whole rather than in specimen slices from the entire organism: generally, it's the way all those unremarkable measures have been sorted out and arranged in coherent order that turns them into masterpieces, while the hack composers seem to have tossed together their measures without rhyme or reason. There's so much pleasure involved in going through one of those heavy old collections of bad music, trying out a piece here or there, suddenly coming across a bit of buried treasure. I don't find that my aesthetics are damaged in any way by hearing that bulk of mediocrity in these compositions.

My piano is one of those "uprights" that you usually see advertised for sale in the classified pages of your newspaper. It is quite ornate in its woodwork, and it has an enormously fancy lettering for the name of the manufacturer, for a very good reason. It is called a Gramer piano, and the eye reads this name as Cramer, because when this piano was made, brand names were very important factors in deciding which piano to buy and judging the affluence of the people you were visiting, and the Gramer public relations department obviously hoped to cause many casual bystanders to assume that it was a Cramer, a quite famous brand of piano. It lacks one useful feature of most modern pianos, the pedal which sustains tones only in the bass regions and doesn't cause the treble passages to blur. On the other hand, it possesses two "soft pedals", a quite unusual accomplishment for any piano. One of them subdues the tone like a normal soft pedal. The other practically extinguishes it, and possesses a tiny subpedal which can be used to lock the main pedal into action indefinitely. It would be ideal for late night performances in the summer when the windows are open and the neighbours are in bed. Unfortunately, this mutant pedal went on the blink soon after the piano's coming, and the tuner-repairman was disinclined to try to repair it. Aside from that, the piano has required a minimum of repairs. After ten years or so, when the ersatz ivory began to work loose on several keys, the tuner warned that this always proved to be a contagious malady, and talked us into having all the key coverings replaced with new stuff which he guaranteed wouldn't come unglued. He was as good a promiser as he was a tuner. I've never busted a string, and I've been the victor in a couple of brief engagements with moths that threatened to damage the felt. The trouble now involves mostly the dryness of this house in the winter and the glue that was used to hold together some of the more delicate mechanisms which cause the keys and hammers to operate. The tuner keeps pestering me to have a humidifier installed, and I keep intending to do so, and never do because I hate the thought of having to add yet another daily chore to the list, that of adding water, and of experiencing another slight increase in the background noise in the house to go along with that provided when the refrigerator and furnace are busy, and of paying still more money to the people who manufacture electricity when I'm on the point of quitting my regular job, and facing a sharp reduction in income.

There haven't been many days since the early 1930s when I haven't managed at least fifteen minutes or so at the piano. Generally, it gets less use in the winter, for the simple reason that my hands chap horribly in cold weather and it's impossible to play anything complicated for more than a few minutes without starting to bleed. The two broken bones naturally kept me away from the piano for many weeks. But some pianism every day has become such an integral part of my life that I find myself missing the relaxation it provides enormously when I go out of town on vacation or have one of those sick headaches in which any physical movement creates nausea. And every so often, as I'm fumbling with something too difficult for me, I wonder the old uncertainty over again and again: could I have been a really good pianist, if I'd tried hard enough? Maybe. If I really work at a passage, it improves in a gratifying way. I can tell the difference between the way music should and should not be performed, when I hear others playing the piano, and I should have had the ability to perform this, choosing the right musical path for my own playing. When I take a week's vacation and go nowhere, I may spend two or three times as many minutes at the piano per day as I do through the rest of the year, and the improvement in the way my fingers operate is obvious after the third or fourth day, giving me a suspicion that three or four hours' genuine practice every day for a year would get me close to concertizing technique, even at this late date. On the debit side, I doubt that I am fitted by personality for the attitude that you need to successful careerism as a pianist, the competitive instinct to outdo your competitors, to blow your own horn, to toady to the old ladies on committees and to bully managers and agents. The essential physical strength required to be a fine pianist is something else I might not have been able to acquire. My fingers are stronger than most parts of me, but my back starts to ache sooner than it should and I don't have much weight to help in climaxes; Rachmaninoff seems to have been the only man who made a career as a pianist with a physique and temperament similar to mine. Well, I'll never know, but as recently as 1963 I came awfully close to deciding to make an all-out effort to gain a livelihood of some sort of piano-playing. When I suffered the second broken hip, I also got a tremendous bang on the head that left me unable to do more than lie there and think for a week or longer. I decided that I'd worked my last day for the newspaper, that I'd start to perfect my technique as soon as I could sit at a piano, and I'd dip into savings until I had at least the ability to become someone's accompanist or a repetiteur or something. It might have worked, if the company hadn't had an aberration which caused it to pay my full salary during the nine or ten weeks of idleness. Despite my sophistication about my employers, I didn't feel like quitting as soon as I got well, and apathy took over again after that. I wonder where I'd be starving today, if I'd actually made the change?

One problem would have been a deficiency that resulted from my playing the piano solely for my own amusement all these years. This left me with no reason to memorize music, since almost all my playing was done at home where the music was at hand, and there was nobody listening whom I would want to impress by doing it from memory. To this day, I don't know anything long or complicated that I could be certain of playing from memory without a lot of guessing; I'm sure that I would get the tunes right and would fit together the main sections in proper order, but some of the finer details would require improvisation.

You might be able to guess what compensation contrived to make up for this deficiency. Since all my playing was done from music, I became quite adept at sightreading. This is the task that some excellent pianists stumble over badly, simply because they've spent so much time learning to perfection and memorizing individual pieces. For me, there is absolutely no terror in a work I've never seen before, unless it's something in a wildly different idiom from any familiar music. With all respect for the accomplishments of scientists and chess players, I suspect that the human mind's ability to conquer previously unknown music at

sight is one of its most impressive accomplishments. Even if the general vocabulary of the composition is familiar, because you've seen many other works by the same composer, there are an awful lot of bits of information which the eyes must see, transmit to the mind, and somehow get into the muscles of the arms and hand in every second. Or maybe the ability to memorize music is even better than this. When we speak about "memorizing" a work, we don't mean that it is written in the mind. It's somehow engraved in the less aware areas of the brain, which can cause the fingers to play the composition letter-perfect even if the pianist isn't thinking very strenuously about what he's doing. I can't hear what an announcer is saying on the car radio when I'm driving, most of the time, and I don't understand how I'm able to play even a bar or two of a well-known composition when my eye wanders from the music and my fingers continue during the time my mind is concentrating on the odd sound the furnace just made or whether I should take an Excedrin.

For that matter, the whole phenomenon of "practice" is quite mysterious to me. Why does a person play a composition so much better, if he really works at it long and hard? He isn't gaining general improvement in agility because he'll have only slightly greater ability to play other music well. He isn't getting acquainted with all details of the work under study, for performance continues to improve long after he has seen and reseen every note and other symbol on the printed page. It's as if he were engraving the muscular processes into some part of his memory cells where they will be activated by a more subconscious than conscious process later on. Of course, there are mountains of music designed solely to increase pianistic ability. But despite their traditional role in a pianist's education, those dreadfully dull exercises seem to have little or no more usefulness than selected passages from difficult great compositions provide. Rachmaninoff never used anything except HANON'S VIRTUOSO PIANIST, which, despite its name, is more a limbering-tool than the usual kind of technical studies. Gershwin reputedly resorted only to one brief Cramer exercise when he got a concert engagement, and Horowitz never practises at all on anything.

I was fairly lucky to have a reasonably large supply of printed music at a time when family resources didn't permit its purchase in large quantities. There were all those old songs that my father had accumulated, plus a heavy red-bound collection of semi-classics and classics arranged for piano, and a musical scrap-book which he'd chosen and bound at a time when he was thinking about a job playing for silent movies. That particular volume is a great worry to me just now. After I'd outgrown it, my father shipped it off to his sister in San Diego. Now my aunt is old and tottery, and I don't know how to go about assuring the safety of that volume in case she drops dead suddenly, three thousand miles away. There are no other relatives or mutual friends out there, her health is too bad for me to make a request in a letter, and I'd like to have that volume back eventually.

Besides these basic materials for piano-playing, I could afford THE ETUDE monthly. You younger sprats may have never heard of that magazine, for it's been dead and buried for more than a decade and it was a feeble shadow of itself during its final years. But once it was really something. Each month it offered a couple of dozen pages of music, mostly teaching pieces but also some short classics, sandwiched between lots of exciting information on every kind of musical topic. It wasn't very learned, but you'll find items from it included quite regularly in bibliographies at the end of quite important books about music and musicians. I got it regularly during its last quarter-century, and have since picked up a fair quantity of back issues. The music has long ceased to be very interesting, but there's something compelling about a leisurely thumbing through an old copy and reading about long-gone musical people in the present tense. For the first year or two, I read that magazine as thoroughly as I've ever pondered over fanzines

or prozines, even the articles on how to achieve a good, even trill on the violin (you keep in mind the way the vibrator moves back and forth on an old-fashioned spring-wound alarm clock, and let the finger of your left hand do likewise).

A little later came the miraculous discovery that Hagerstown's public library had the music collection of Kee-Mar College, a young ladies' seminary which had been closed down here a long while ago and converted into a hospital. Segregation prevented me from borrowing this music direct - children weren't allowed into adult portions of the library - but a go-between solved that problem and I acquired my first full comprehension of what a quantity of superb music existed. It's strange: just during the past year, I've run into a similar stroke of good luck. All Maryland libraries now have reciprocity, permitting me to borrow from the giant music collection at Baltimore's Enoch Pratt and return them at the Hagerstown library, or for that matter to get them at the Hagerstown library by paying a few pennies for the necessary form. It tells something about energy and enthusiasm leakage to admit that I've not yet taken advantage of this privilege, even though it opens to me access to more music than I'd ever conquer miserliness enough to purchase. Of course, by now I've acquired for myself most of the works in that Kee-Mar collection, aside from a few things long out of print. If anyone out there ever runs across a copy of the vocal score for Horatio Parker's opera, MONA, for less than ten bucks, will he please buy it and make a profit from it by reselling it to me? It's the chief difference between my music holdings and those of Kee-Mar.

As I said, vast quantities of piano music are available. But there's still a certain amount of collecting opportunity. You'd think that a famous composer like Franz Liszt would be represented in publishers' catalogues by all that he wrote for the piano, for instance. But the closest thing to a complete edition of his works is available, to my knowledge, only on microfiche, not precisely the most suitable form for using at the keyboard.

The whole matter of availability of piano music is so different from the literature situation. You can get either by purchase or in any good public library virtually everything the important writers wanted preserved, in editions that don't falsify noticeably what the author wrote. But music publishing has always been a more helter-skelter, dubious trade. If you aren't an expert on a given great composer, you have a terrible time figuring out which edition is most trustworthy. One publisher hired a big name to "edit" the music, which usually consisted of inserting some slur marks and dynamic indications without distinguishing those of the editor from those of the composer. Another company published an "original text" edition, which turns out to be a copy of the first published versions of the works, complete with all the mistakes the engravers made at the time. Another went direct to the original manuscripts, to be sure of authenticity, but didn't distinguish between the composer's own works and the compositions of other people he had copied because he didn't have enough money to buy a printed copy or the work was available only in manuscript. Then there are the weird controversies that burst forth over composers' intentions. A certain mark which Schubert put constantly into his manuscripts has been identified as an accent mark or a signal to lower the volume. A certain E flat near the end of a Chopin prelude has been laughed away as a mistake and hailed as a stroke of genius because it introduces a seventh into the final F major chord. A few publishers have been issuing new editions which embody the best scholarly opinion of what the composer really wrote, and that's fine, but I somehow like the challenge of deciding for myself if this is as it should be or not in each bar of a dubious edition.

Remember what I said about the solidity and toughness of good music. It takes

more than meddling editors to do any harm to it. By attending public auctions, going to second-hand music dealer in big cities, and encountering a couple of lucky tips from friends, I've managed to acquire a fair quantity of recherche piano music over the years. And if things go as they have been going, no individual may be able to buy music in new condition after a little longer. It is growing abnormally expensive, unless it's intended solely for teaching purposes or has a chance to reach a mass audience. I suppose that colleges, libraries, and conservatoria do the bulk of the purchasing of new editions nowadays, and they can afford the inflated prices. It isn't unusual to find ten bucks or more listed on the cover of a new copyrighted work running to only sixty pages or so. You can get discounts on the price of music, if you try hard enough, but the discounts aren't as big or as consistent as they are on the list prices of records. Of course, it is not entirely the publishers' fault. Nobody has ever invented, in this technological, scientific world, a mechanical way to engrave music. To make published music look professional, it's still necessary to have someone do it by hand pretty much as it was done a century ago. Of course, you can use offset printing from a carefully written manuscript, but it looks shoddy and is hard to play, until you're totally familiar with the penmanship. It takes a long time to engrave a page of music, when a craftsman sits there punching the little ovals and stems and other symbols with his small tools, one at a time, laboriously planning to make sure that one bar won't look crowded compared with the next, and arranging so almost every line of music will end with a bar line at the extreme right margin.

I don't buy much recorded piano music. This is partly because I prefer the variety of interpretation that my uncertain technique automatically provides when I play the music myself. But it's also partially the result of the fact that I don't really care much for the sound of the piano. This isn't as important or anticlimactic, after all the foregoing, as you might imagine. The piano has so many other advantages as a source of solo performance of music that I don't mind the crudity of its musical sounds, as long as I'm doing the pianism. When I do listen to other pianists, I find myself preferring women at the keyboard. This might be fallout from my libido, or it could be simply the fact that the good women pianists of our era avoid the chills and fever interpretations that so many male virtuosi prefer. Novaes is my ideal as a pianist, in every respect, but I'm also quite proud of some of my old Dame Myra Hess records, even the 78 rpm Schumann concerto with a couple of dreadful false notes that should never have gone to the stampers. Gina Bachauer is my bete noire among the feminine pianists, incidentally. I heard her in a Mozart sonata once, a performance that caused this theory that good music survives no matter what you do to it.

I've never had any desire to own a harpsichord. I played a Hagerstonian's harpsichord once and didn't enjoy the playing any more than I enjoy listening to it, and was totally unable to hear the difference between the two registers which he claimed his instrument possessed. The revival of interest in the harpsichord seems to me to be quite the most inexplicable event of recent musical history. Read anything written about music in the years when the harpsichord was the major keyboard instrument, and you'll never find a kind word for it. People tolerated it, apparently because the clavichord was almost inaudible and the organ was too much trouble to play and pump outside churches. When the piano became the coming thing, poets and even musicians wrote elegies to their clavichords, but never showed the slightest regret at giving up their harpsichords. The harpsichord sounds to me like a bar-room piano heard from a back room as it's played by someone incapable of varying the dynamic level. I wonder if the harpsichord fad will vanish as totally as other temporary musical fads of the past, like the outbreak of Indian tribal music in the first part of this century?

For that matter, whatever happened to all the pianos that had special innovations of their own? They had for the early 20th century something of the status now enjoyed by the constantly appearing innovations in music reproducing equipment, where an oscilloscope on an FM tuner or a different kind of high frequency filter on an amplifier is introduced with world-redeeming implications. There was a time when pianos were made with attachments which were supposed to turn the tone into an imitation of a mandolin or banjo, tremolo devices, and sometimes things which it's impossible to conceive from the advertisement, like the Conover piano that had a "Repeating Action Metallic Action Rail, Duplex Bridge with Auxiliary Vibrators, Telescope Lamp Bracket, Automatic Music Desk." Of all the gadgets and innovations, the only type I've ever had a slight urge to own is a pedal keyboard. Efforts were made from time to time to popularize pianos with an extra row of keys large enough and low enough for the feet to use. Schumann actually composed a small amount of music for this type of instrument, which could of course handle quite a bit of music originally written for the organ. But I suppose the attempt to keep the feet busy was doomed from the outset because of the difficulty of handling complex music with no foot free for the sustaining pedal, and because the jumpingabout required for the pedal manipulation would be harder on a pianist, whose touch governs the loudness of tone, than for the organist, who can flick or push hard and get the same sound out of a key. Anyone who might be interested in all the byways of piano manufacture and performance down through the centuries should find endless delight in the best book ever written about the instrument: Arthur Loesser's MEN, WOMEN AND PIANOS. I doubt that it has ever appeared in paperback, but any public library should have the hardbound edition, which can be dipped into at any page in a browsing manner or read from start to finish with equal pleasure-giving results. The only fault I find with it is no support for my long-held theory that Bach really wrote those keyboard concertos for the piano, no matter if he did complain about the primitive samples of the instrument which he saw.

When FAPA really was FAPA because Charles Burbee was a member, that organization contained a fair amount of musing about player pianos. Burbee was one of the first prophets of the player piano renaissance which has since affected large areas of mundania. I have never owned one, although I have fond memories of watching one work when I went visiting as a small boy. Player pianos are a whole tradition of their own. They were developed to surprising levels of complexity at one time. One brand even had its mechanics in a mechanism separate from the piano itself: this contraption was placed in front of the piano, close enough to reach the keys, whereupon it proceeded actually to play the piano by pressing down the keys, instead of depending on a roll of perforated paper rolling through the bowels of the piano proper. The only thing that causes collectors more arguments than the accuracy of old acoustical recordings of pianists is the question of how honest the piano rolls were. They offered so many more opportunities for pianists to cheat because it was easy to play much slower than concert pace, or to insert or correct erring notes after the performance was complete. You might get a better notion of Hagerstown's progressiveness by learning that it has been only three or four years since local music stores stopped stocking new piano roll releases. Apparently nobody wants anything now but the old releases. I confess total inability to follow the reasoning of purists who refuse to listen to an electrified player piano because it's too mechanical a device.

The tape recorder is very useful for anyone who can play the piano. It opens up to him the vast world of four-hand piano music, which has been closed for most of us since the habit of playing the piano in every home declined, unless you happen to have a friend with similar tastes and spare time schedules which coincide with your own. It's easy to record two of the hands on tape, then play the other two as you play back the tape. This is much more practical than playing along with commercially pre-recorded tapes, which usually are a shade flat or sharp compared

with your piano. My ancient instrument is more than a half-tone flat, incidentally; many years ago, the tuner decided that bringing it up to concert pitch would threaten an implosion of awesome consequences, so I hear all the Beethoven sonatas and Scriabin nocturnes in the wrong key, and seem to be none the worse for it.

As things stand now, I can play with fair accuracy most music up to the level of most Beethoven, Brahms, Chopin, and Debussy. A few things by each of those composers are beyond me without a death-defying direct assault: a few of the Chopin etudes are negotiable only with liberal amounts of swearing, the HAMMEN-KLAVIER's fugue usually results in at least one severe finger sprain, and the Brahms PAGANINI VARIATIONS frankly terrify me. I've tackled music that is reputed to be much more difficult than those variations, and have felt that I could conquer it, given lots of time and muzzled neighbours. But I can't conceive how anybody can play certain passages in the Brahms work without some kind of cheating. A few fans have heard me via tape and have been guardedly kind in their comments; one who knows something about good music was even brash enough to encourage me to make that belated assault on the concert world. I have also exposed to a few fannish ears my compositions for piano, but those who heard them were too dazed by their style to be coherent in their criticisms. People can't seem to understand that no matter how conservative my listening tastes may be, it doesn't necessarily follow that I should feel impelled to write music a century behind the times. I don't have much in common with Artur Schnabel, but at least we have behaved alike in this matter of listening old-fashioned and composing new-fashioned.

I was even a radio star for a year or two. Before Hagerstown had network service for its radio stations, the broadcasters drew heavily on local talent to fill up their schedules, and when they ran out of talent, they took just plain local people like me. I didn't receive a cent for supplying a quarter-hour of piano music once weekly over a local station, but it gave me a trifle more self-assurance and the ability to go through with a duty even when I did not feel in the mood. Alas, I fear that the programming was even worse than the performance. The station didn't want to waste a whole quarter-hour on just one or two compositions, so I was forced to use items short enough to create a respectable list of four or five numbers each program. Conceivably, this reduced the danger of my announcer dozing off, too. Things were surprisingly formal for an obscure little 250-watter back in those days before the disc jockey and the network had permitted stations to operate in a shoebox with a tiny staff. Almost every week I was ushered with ceremony into one of the three studios, lights were flashed on and off for testing purposes, the announcer and man in the control room made all sorts of signs at one another and occasionally someone even told me that he had been listening. The station I played for had a full-time staff pianist on the payroll, who filled up two or three hours every day. When the network affiliation came, the staff pianist got a job playing on a big ocean liner and I became oboe player in a Sunday school orchestra, but that's another story altogether.

As I've hinted, difficulties involved in learning to play the piano are quite exaggerated. I see no reason why any intelligent adult shouldn't gain some ability without instruction, if he feels that he doesn't want to commit himself to practice bondage under an instructor. I don't recommend the use of a two-octave toy piano to start, and I doubt that chord organs and similar devices can serve as stepping-stones to full-scale pianism. There are various instruction books available for the mature beginner on the piano. I would recommend the use of one that has the middle C approach to learning the keyboard. This makes the treble and bass clef discrepancy unimportant because you begin by playing notes between the two and gradually work simultaneously up into the treble and down into the bass, and you hardly realize that the C above and the C below middle C don't occupy the same position on the two staves. Another thing to look for

in an instruction book is how many of its little pieces are arranged from familiar melodies. Your reaction will depend on you, because some individuals love to be able to play tunes they know almost from the outset, while others are outraged by the thought of pounding out melodies they consider hopelessly square and capitalistic. No matter what friends or piano teachers may tell you, there is no reason for spending any great amount of practice time on purely technical exercises - scales, arpeggios, Czerny studies, and their blood relatives. Working on them might make the difference if you wanted to make music your vocation, but you'll play almost as well if you never learn the scales. Besides, memorizing efficient fingerings for all the major and minor scales and acquiring the ability to play all of them very rapidly and evenly represent a much greater task than playing correctly music on the level of Mozart sonatas.

There's no end to the amount of piano music than can be handled by a person who has only a passing acquaintance with the instrument. Easy piano music comes in two species: original works that happen to be born easy, and easy arrangements of more difficult compositions. It's hard to find really simple arrangements of long works like symphonies from beginning to end, but there's no limit to the variety of individual movements and excerpts that you can get in this form. For reasons I've never comprehended, popular music when issued in sheet music form is fairly difficult to play. This makes no sense, since a good pianist will never let anyone hear him playing it from the commercial sheet music but will work out his own adaptation, just as every professional does. If you care to go direct to original works, you'll find that unadulterated classics begin to grow available to a budding pianist quite soon. MIKROKOSMOS, Bela Bartok's big batch of teaching pieces, starts with things you can play in the first days and increases gradually in difficulty in the most musical way imaginable. Quite a lot of Bach's keyboard music is not difficult, if the novice pianist hasn't let himself fall into bad fingering or hand position habits, and doesn't let the reputation of the composer frighten him. Schumann's music for or descriptive of young people is quite sophisticated in subtle ways and as easy as it sounds, but by choosing carefully you can find easy pages in such works as the ALBUM FOR THE YOUNG and the CHILDREN'S SONATAS. Mozart wrote his dullest music in the tiny piano pieces he composed as a child, but most of them are easy to perform. Greater music by Mozart is not only more difficult but exceptionally hard on the pianist's deficiencies. Everything is so exposed, there is so little in the music that can be covered up, and if the pianist does anything wrong, he knows it and feels guilty about it. Quite a bit of extremely old keyboard music is very easy for pianists, if they ignore the embellishments and ornaments which these compositions for earlier keyboard instruments come equipped with. The gingerbread doesn't sound nearly as good on the piano as it did on the clavichord and there's less reason for it; much of it was intended to mark the rhythm on instruments that could provide little dynamic variation, and to stretch out the tone in slow sections. The piano tone doesn't die away as fast as some more primitive ancestors did.

Of course, there's another gate to the land of piano music, but for most of us it's straighter than consistent learning by printed music. We used to call it playing by ear, although I imagine that a more dignified term like personal self-expression is preferred nowadays. This is the knack of playing on the piano any music you've grown acquainted with, even though you can't read music or haven't seen the score of the work in question. Almost everyone who learns to play the piano monkeys around with this trick from time to time, and apparently a few jazz pianists use it exclusively, although I'm quite sceptical about most of the legends about jazz greats who never could read a note of music. My Aunt Nora was by far the most skilled practitioner of this art that I've ever heard in person. She needed to hear a popular song only once or twice, in order to get its melody firmly in her mind. Then she could sit down at the piano and play her version of it, properly harmonized, equipped with interesting little counterpoints in the

accompanying figures, and always doing this a little differently for each tune instead of adapting the same patterns to everything. I don't know whether she learned this art or came upon it by accident, but even quite late in life, she could go to the piano for the first time in months and play something as fluently as if her old fingers had been working for hours daily on five-finger exercises.

If by some wild circumstance this article should inspire any fan to buy a first grade instruction book and try to teach himself to play the piano, I'd like to add just one urgent piece of advice. Do not, under any circumstances, no matter how extreme the temptation, look at your fingers or the keyboard while you're playing, until you have been playing the piano for at least a dozen years. It will take that long to reach the technical level required to play the all-out virtuoso stuff which is hardly negotiable without peeking. Until then, the changes in hand position won't be long enough or abrupt enough to make it necessary to look. And once acquired, the habit of watching the fingers is virtually impossible to break, the eyes keep hopping frantically from the music to the hands and back to the music, and any slight increase in security of performance that vision imparts is more than lost in the hesitations and mixups as the music flickers in and out of the field of vision. THE ETUDE used to publish an occasional set of instructions on how to manufacture sinister contraptions designed to prevent this bad habit. The simplest consisted of a sort of drawbridge arrangement which hooked over the musician's ears and stuck out from his Adam's apple toward the piano so it would block vision of the keyboard. I'm sure that it must have had a slight evolutionary effect on ear configurations, if acquired characteristics are as inheritable as recent research indicates, and it's so much simpler not to fall into the bad habit from the outset.

Incredibly, the instruction book that started me off, John M Williams' VERY FIRST BOOK, contained a chart which actually encouraged the pernicious form of behaviour. It was a cardboard strip which you were supposed to stand up behind the black keys. On it were printed all the notes on the staff, corresponding to the keys which were in front of them. This was a fine way to find quickly any note in a piece of music, but it forced the beginner to look down at the keys. Fortunately another aunt had taken me aside in my extreme youth and impressed on me the fate that awaited anybody who looked at his hands while playing the piano. (The whole matter is closely related to the two methods of learning to type, of course. If you learn to type by the hunt-and-peck method, you've have an awful time converting to touch-typing without continuing to look at the keys, and as long as you watch the keys, you will be slowed by the squillions of times you must change your gaze from the keys to the line which appears on the paper or some document you are copying or referring to. And the typist doesn't have the flimsy excuse that he will make mistakes if he doesn't watch how far he is flinging an entire hand from one side to another, for the touch typing system is the equivalent of a violinist who never needs to leave first position to play any music he wishes. My sense of pitch is terrible so I never tried to learn how to play the violin and I can't offer any advice on whether it's advisable to look when you are shifting to higher positions).

What piano music do I like best? Mostly 19th century stuff, although I suspect that my tastes would cover more modern stuff if the scores weren't so blasted expensive, while most of them are covered by copyright and available from only one publisher. I have one blind spot: Chopin. I play him quite a bit, from some obscure sense of duty and because the music is so wonderfully written for the piano and human hand. But I can't believe that Chopin would have survived as a major composer if his music didn't possess those very qualities and if musicians weren't so predominantly piano-centred; think how Paganini's music has become a minor curiosity, even though it grows out of the violin just as completely as Chopin's is inherent in the piano. I love to tackle Liszt, much of whose music

is just ahead of my ability. His compositions somehow demonstrate that they were written by someone who loved music more than anyone who ever lived, and whatever his vulgarities and lapses from inspiration Liszt seems never to have written a note for any reason other than sheer love of making music. I am also an unreconstructed Schumannist, at a time when his music is regarded by the musical establishment with a condescending smile. Even more than Schubert's, Schumann's music typifies and embodies for me the German-speaking lands and their peoples as they exist in my imagination, a saner past, and the good things that humans can be if they try hard enough. I have bought up all the Clementi I can find, because he wrote music that is almost imperceptibly less fine than that of Mozart or early Beethoven, a good place to turn when you're temporarily unwilling to play the very best for the next day or so. Weber is another minor master, whose three fat volumes of piano music in the Peters edition are rapidly falling to pieces from frequent use and from the energy with which I turn pages when I get really interested in what I'm doing. I've never agreed with the theory that 17th and 18th century keyboard music is at least as fine as that which came later. Scarlatti, for instance, bores me to the point of slumber from the listening standpoint, although I've got a lot of his sonatas for the healthful exercise they provide to the fingers. I keep thinking the mad thought that these Scarlatti sonatas are not intended to be played by themselves but were really accompaniments for operatic arias that have been mislaid. Play the piano part of a voice-and-piano arrangement of Verdi arias on the harpsichord, with no voice and no attempt to insert the vocal line on the keyboard, and you'll often hear something strangely like the Scarlatti sonata patterns. Bach himself edifies and impresses me when I play him but I can't feel a real love for his keyboard music and I turn to it rarely. I like Bach best as a writer of vocal music, and then only in quarter-hour sessions. The keyboard music which is in such great favour now from the distant past, Rameau and Purcell and Couperin and all the rest, sounds trivial with an occasional interlude of genius, whether I hear it played in recordings by harpsichordists or play it myself on the piano. For all that we read about music as a universal language, it has always impressed me as a quite contemporary language, one that is hard to translate if you get too far from the nation or time of its origin. I admire immensely the Americans who have fallen in love with the music of India, particularly if they are sincere and aren't just following the fad from raga to raga, but India's greatest musicians mean as little to me as Bing Crosby. I suppose I exhausted my acclimatizing abilities when I got used to classical music from Haydn through Strauss and I'll just have to live with the consciousness of that limitation, plus the faint trace of suspicion that this music is really far superior to any other sort that has been produced anywhere on earth since decipherable notations and consecutive traditions have existed.

In any event, there the piano sits, still getting used practically every day even though it's dreadfully out of tune and has three keys which don't produce more than a whisper of sound. I can afford a better piano but even this house is hardly large enough to splurge waste space on storage of a wornout piano and the only way I can imagine myself parting with this one is to find some absolutely permanent organization with civilized members that needs a piano for just a few minutes' use every week to accompany singing of a lodge song or something. Professor Carl's piano would probably survive indefinitely under such limited use, long enough in any event for me to be no longer in a position to care when its end finally came. Or I could move into a bigger house, one that would have enough extra rooms to permit an old piano to be stored away as a retired treasure from the past without risking exhaustion of space for piling up books and records in the years to come. For a fleeting moment, I wondered if anyone had ever turned a piano into a book or record cabinet by taking out the works and using the outer case for storage. Then the gory details of the evisceration that would be involved repelled me worse than an all-out junking. Of course, I might open an

issue of HIGH FIDELITY any month now and read about a kit which permits you to electrify old pianos by installing tiny IC devices which fit without removing the strings and produce an idealized piano tone by a mere touch of the keys. That I could live with. But in the end, as soon as the temperature and humidity rise, I'll call the tuner, ask him to come and bring along all his tools, and then invent an excuse to leave the house for the day just after his arrival. I'll avoid his scolding as he detects the extent of the trouble and maybe he'll put the old piano back into presentable condition for a few more months, at a fee not much larger than what I would spend on a fine second-hand recent model. I hope.

- Harry Warner Jr 1969

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## THE MAILING COMMENTS

Again I err - and um, and generally carry on. At the end of March, knowing that I would not be in the April ANZAPA, I resolved to type up my Mailing Comments on the February Mailing. Needless to say, I didn't. Now that I must face the prospect of comments on two mailings, I won't. I may remember some deathless-comments-that-never-came-alive while I ramble on for a few pages, but...

### JOHN BANGSUND

LODBROG 1  
CROG! 6

In recent correspondence, John suggested that he had gafiated altogether, but now I hear rumours of SCYTHROP 22 and CROG! 7. "Whew!" I said to myself (a pesky little character, that 'myself'; I thought I got rid of myself in SFC 9) "That was

a close shave. He scared me there for a moment." Imagine life without Bangsund fanzines. (Now there's an idea for an article... picture insane little fans running around Somerset Place and scrounging McGills for old copies of Bangsund fanzines; picture hordes of lost souls doomed to live their lives outside fandom because they never saw a Bangsund fanzine. Scary.)

Ah, that I knew my lineage, but perhaps it is better not known. At least one side of my family is solid, Scottish, and respectable, as my great-grandfather came out from Scotland during the gold rush and managed goldfield banks around Ballarat. Two generations later, my father followed the same profession.

But further than that I cannot go. "Gillespie" means "Servant of the bishop", which does not entirely explain my family's ties with the Churches of Christ. (Although Alexander Campbell was, as John has already explained somewhere, and as you could guess for yourself, a Scotsman). My mother's family were Triplets, (but there were seven of them) and all I know is that they were of Cornish origin. Not that it matters a great deal, I suppose, except in the unlikely event that one of my relatives digs up some skeletons in some out-of-the-way cupboards. One thing is for certain - I'm never going to discover a lineage as distinguished as John Bangsund's.

CROG! 6 was, to say the least, less cheery than LODBROG. I had had no idea that you had moved from APEA to proof-reading for a start, and then there was the matter of the SCYTHROP awards, which I dealt with in SFC 11. I was going to type out "GOD FIRST MADE IDIOTS" for my Fifth Form as a perfect example of how to write an essay, but then I wondered whether to leave in the s f references, and then decided that it shouldn't be reprinted without the s f references. So my fifth-formers still have no idea of how to write an essay. I wish I had that capacity to be so entertainingly miserable, instead of so miserably unentertaining.

Leigh Edmonds will manage (a good word, you must admit) the Ditmars for 1971, so I hope he read CROG! very carefully.

PETER ROBERTS

EGG 1

sent me any of his in return. But EGG has its points; it's a pity I can't think of any of them to report on.

I'm not feeling particularly kindly towards Peter Roberts, because he lumps together ANZAPA with all those other unknown organizations, and because he has never replied to any of my fanzines, or

ALEX ROBB

WITH AH! BRIGHT SINGS

invent a new emotion for an Alex Robb fanzine.

Er, well, um - let's face it, what do you do with an Alex Robb fanzine? Try to avoid the hurricane that sears your eyes as you try to read it? Laugh hysterically? Cry? Giggle? They will have to

Don't think that I don't enjoy them; it's just picking myself up from the floor afterwards that is exhausting. Beaut stuff on Philip Dick for a start. The response to the PKD stuff in SFC 9 has been pretty good so far, although lots of people think that if they squeak in slightest protest against the man, I will flay them alive (or whatever else fanzine editors do to get their kicks). People who say "I read one Philip Dick book - I think it was called the JEWELS OF APTOR - and didn't get past the third page and never read another since" get all the attention they deserve. Indeed, I became so tired of not receiving glancing blows at Dick that I outlined the substance of a good anti-Dick argument in the REAL THING article. Philip Dick isn't God, you know, even if he does see him occasionally.

"If you want a slice of my mind and very rarely do I seem to offer it..!" You are kidding, aren't you, Alex? And, aw shucks, wouldn't that word describe the main character of that modern, with-it crazy mixed-up OEDIPUS REX? I don't really see why 90% of the words of 90% of the children at the average school should not appear in print, although I would get rather sick of them myself. Either people do or do not speak in a certain way, and I would like to think that at least a few authors catch the guts of modern idioms.

I won't reprint all the comments on Dick, but most of them are very interesting. I'm still waiting for your comments on Aldiss, Alex.

Poke holes at Stanislaw Lem? You would be going, I think. Lem makes me realize just how 'orribly hignorant I am, although I thought Foyster had completed that job quite effectively. The best thing about Lem's work is that he shows up some of the real possibilities in science fiction, as well as deftly cauterizing the wounds left by the science fiction we must put up with at the moment.

RON CLARKE

M31 2

I won't swear, because everybody else in the apa has probably done so before me. To leave off the ending of that story.....!

I've tended to think myself that man has been not entirely well-made. My main quarrel with Our Maker is the shape of our ears. You can shut your eyes, but it is incredibly difficult to shut off your ears. At various times I have tried cotton wool and wax ear-plugs, or putting a pillow over the top of my head, but what I would have really liked to be was the first representative of a generation with hinged ears, especially proof against the screams of small children, the rattling of tin roofs, and the talking of people. Apart from that minor improvement, and the one that you mention, John, I should say that we were left enough faults to make life interesting and occasionally worth living. Most of the people I've admired most were pretty miserable people anyway, worse luck for them, but good luck for us (people like Beethoven and Mozart, for a start).

As you may know, the dreaded word is spoken <sup>in</sup> ZABRISKIE POINT. If you look carefully you will notice that the girl writes it in the sand as well when the pilot buzzes her car. We don't directly see what she writes on the sand.

DAVID GRIGG

SLITHEY TOVE

"You anzapans have let a monster loose"? May there be more of them - at least you will be among friends :: SLITHEY TOVE is good fun, anyway, David. I must admit that I let out far too much hot air

in my first ANZAPazines, and have now lost some of the impetus of the early MARCHCHRONs. No doubt, you will lose some of that gusto in a short time.

Erudite people like David Grigg will no doubt notice the resemblances between Lewis Carroll's best jokes and those of P K Dick. Since Carroll was a philosopher, mathematician and scientist, and most noticeably a philosopher in ALICE, then the resemblance should not be surprising. I tend to regard THROUGH THE LOOKING-GLASS as my favourite book, although for official purposes, MADAME BOVARY is still Number 1. You quote the best joke in the Alice books, and it applies to everything.

I very much enjoyed my visit to MUSFA, mainly because you kindly let me talk to you for about an hour. These people don't have much time, but things should pick up when they all finish their degrees. :: Affiliate your clubmag with ANZAPA and write <sup>it</sup> all yourself. People will get so sick of you that they will write articles just for some variety.

PAUL J STEVENS

HOUR OF THE GREEN AND CREAKING  
RETRIBUTION

Where's LSD, huh? chickening out? Self-censorship? ::: Why didn't you tell me about horror movies? Oh, you did. Like the one at the Convention,

I mean, All that beautiful black and white photography, and the beautiful trick effects, as well as the straight good acting. I can see why you lament recent trends in horror movies... even if the censors won't let us see either the classics or the new ones. My main count against horror movies has always been that monsters, etc, are basically so unhorrifying (unhorrific?) compared with the headlines in the daily newspapers. I still think DR STRANGELOVE and THE WAR GAME are the most horrifying films ever made, although FIVE MILLION YEARS TO EARTH, that we saw at Syncon, comes pretty close. ::: I think we shall all have to cultivate a greater interest in STAR TREK. Even MUSFA has more females per meeting than the Melbourne Club. Perhaps, for that reason alone, we need a new Club, although any new premises would inconvenience those like me who could not get to a central location.

BOB SMITH

THRU THE PORTHOLE 2

Bob Smith in ANZAPA! Do we bow low, or merely cross ourselves with the Mailing every time we open it? I hope you last longer than our last Big Name Fan, Redd Boggs, that's all.

Since Foyster will never reveal confidential information, could we ask you, Bob? Just what did John Baxter do in fandom, and for how long? (Have you seen his SCIENCE FICTION IN THE CINEMA yet?). Just what was Foyster like when he first started in fandom? (Harding promises to Tell All, but I would like to hear your evidence as well). Even more incredibly, would anybody be ready to risk his neck and tell us what the young Harding was like? Think of the huge piles of skeletons-in-cupboards that support present Australian fandom.

UP THE LINE is a very entertaining time-paradox story, although there are mainly paradoxes left at the end of the book.

MICHAEL O'BRIEN

COMMAND MODULE .5

You haven't a hope of wringing out comments from me on all that, Michael. But... :: Why not get your magazines through Merv Binns (an interesting ontological proposition, that) as well as your books? From what I hear, very few places in USA have as wide a variety of s f in the one place as Merv does. (But he still misses out on half the stuff I want). ::: I don't believe it - "The ending (of THE ITALIAN JOB) is particularly ghastly". It was magnificent, especially as it confirmed what I suspected all the way through the film - that it was a spoof of an entire genre of films. The chases were impossible and inconsistent, and were all the funnier for the oddity, and the "One-damn-thing-after-another" air of that type of film is beautifully satirized in the ending. But, when I look at the rest of your choices, I can see that we don't agree on films very much at all. ::: Keep up that fanfic. Why don't you get Stephen Campbell to do a comic strip of Fanboy's adventures?

PETER DARLING

APATHY 10

Welcome the return of the suave gentleman of Australian fandom. How are you surviving Ron Clarke's duper, by the way? With Gary Mason around every other night to run off Concomittee stuff, it must be fairly rough going. (If there is a blank space in front of this parenthesis, Mason has been censoring again.) ::: I sent Farmer a copy of SFC containing our discussion on REAP, but have received no reply, and have heard nothing in the

fan press about REAP. My guess is that Farmer is (a) making too much money from spoofs of Tarzan and Doc Savage, and (b) has seen his cause turned into a political roller-coaster, and is suitably horrified. I agree with you though that <sup>this</sup> is an issue that had to be faced, and it might as well be faced by the huge political machine of US government as by any other organization. If only Australian governments had half the energy.

Peter Darling is right! (When is he ever anything else?) Australian fans don't seem to realize just how easy it is to join world fandom without spending too much money. Join fandom for the next four years just to boost our Worldcon bid if you like. All editors like money, but many will accept a Letter of Comment as payment for one issue of their magazines. In SFC 12 or 13, I shall try to list the most important and/or most entertaining fanzines. It's dead easy to LoC - just buy a dollar's worth of aerogrammes and start writing.

I agree with you about the ABC and I don't. In Ararat, the only stations I can receive properly (besides two or three very bad country commercial stations) are the two Melbourne ABC stations and the local regional station. Between the three of them, there are still large chunks of time when there is nothing to listen to. Saturday is good for classical music on 3AR, but the regional station follows 3LO with races and football, and most of a dreary night program. Sunday is pretty bad, after 11am, on every ABC station. And then there's parliament during a fair part of the year on 3LO during the week. The ABC doesn't step on anybody's toes, but it doesn't waken anybody up. When Stockhausen "performed" recently, the pitiful thing was not that people complained bitterly, but that the ABC got upset. The ABC remains sensitive to minority groups, even though minority groups and their influence, remain one of the chief banes of Australian life. When was the last exciting student speaker you heard on Guest of Honour? How many times a decade does the ABC even mention science fiction, or interview a film director, or present a Pinter play, and do you notice how they congratulate themselves when they do, and cringe in front of their ratings surveys, like any other public performer? Of course, the ABC gives much better entertainment than the rest. Of course having the ABC is much better than not having the ABC. But think what an ABC we could have.... if only Australians weren't so scared of excitement and thought.

MERVYN BINNS

RUBBISH BINNS April 70

Practice makes perfect. Well, almost perfect. This is certainly the best RUBBISH BINNS yet, and I'm glad you stayed in the apa. Your summary of the Convention is fairly accurate. Most people will

be scared of all that money you mention, though, but AISF and the Bidding Committee may be able to raise funds where nobody else could. Ads are already appearing in lots of places, but if ANZAPAns have not yet joined Noreascon or Heicon, and do not subscribe to SFR, then they will have little idea of current developments. So far as I know, only Gary Mason and I have yet joined either Heicon or Noreascon, and while this position stays, then I don't really see why overseas fans should be interested in Australian fandom. You're dead right about the egocentric Convention... but perhaps no single person could control all aspects of the monster convention that happened at Easter. Anyway, see SFC 11 for my general impressions.

JOHN RYAN

BONZER 10

I should have cheered you up with a few more comments, but... I hope SFC 11 gave you some idea of my impressions of the Conventions, and I hope you make it at New Year. Ignore Bernhouse; it's not easy, but we usually succeed.