Philadelphia Records and New York Herald-Tribunes are extinct, but it looks as if Horizons is going to make it for at least one more issue. This is volume 30, number 3, FAPA number 112, whole number 118, the May, 1969, edition, and it frightens me to think that a man may walk on the moon before I write again a colophon. Harry Warner, Jr., 423 Summit Avenue, Hagerstown, Maryland, 21740, U.S.A., has not yet been deposed as writer of most of the contents, and I hope that the Coulsons will be publishers again. Post no bills. A Desilu Production. Nov schmoz ka pop?

In the Beginning

The Fantasy Amateur: The contents of the mailing listing told me an odd story. For the first time in memory, I'd read virtually half of a FAPA mailing before getting the bundle. Out of 280 pages, I was responsible for the 24-page Horizons, I'd already received a copy of the 102-page Niekas, four pages of The Fantasy Amateur are not new because they reprint the constitution, the egoboo poll ballot hardly counts as a duplication of another page in the official organ, and I may have already had a copy of the TAFF ballot. Such a circumstance makes it easy to get mailing comments cut promptly. '' This poll ballot is an improvement for the way you can give all your votes in a category to one person. But there are still too many categories and five points for unsung fapan seems extreme: it means that unobtrusiveness is a better way of getting points than writing the best fiction. And once again, I don't care how few people vote in the poll. Get out the vote campaigns annoy me. All they do is falsify totals by prodding a few people who don't care enough to vote carefully. Bletherings: I tried to find Carnoustie in an atlas, but the name kept appearing as Heaven to my eyes. If I thought Carnoustie would remain unchanged for a couple more decades, I'd buy a one-way ticket immediately. I'll bet that the sports writers did more complaining about the wind and rain during the open golf competition than the golfers. Nobody should take complaints about the weather on the sports pages seriously, because sports writers as a breed are incapable of being comfortable at any temperature lower than 84° or in any breeze stronger than two miles per hour. They proved that spectators at one of the Green Bay Packers playoffs couldn't have survived the subzero afternoon and they almost stampeded San Francisco into abandoning Candlestick Park because of the persistent wind, which has never yet blown off the mound any pitcher larger than Stu Miller. Horizons: Too late for me to mention it in the last issue, Helen Wesson told me that she has a very large collection of back issues of Horizons for sale. I hope it's not too late to announce that truthfully. I'm tempted to buy them myself, just to save the trouble of trying to get together a file of this magazine from the chaos on the attic. Le Moindre: There's no comparison between fandom's presumption in calling the North American convention a "worldcon" and the accurate designation of baseball's World Series. Fandom should have a real worldcon, moving among the nations and giving lots of program time to fandom and prodom in Europe, Asia, and South America. But there's not the slightest doubt that we really do determine the world championship of baseball over here. Major league teams that go barnstorming in Japan always make winning records. Big league players who go to the Caribbean and South America for winter ball hit so much better or achieve such superior pitching records that the level of play in those leagues must

be inferior. Baseball isn't popular enough elsewhere in the world to create any first-rate competition, although it seems to be catching on suddenly in Europe, particularly in Holland and Italy. Service men who have formed little league teams are doing much missionary work on the continent. '' Judging by the amount of comment I attracted, my statement about airport parking meters wasn't clear. What I was trying to say was: governments don't build either free parking lots or lots where you can arrange to park for days at a time near railroad and bus stations. If I want to get on a Greyhound in Hagerstown, I can't leave the car at a parking meter. I think that government should be consistent and put parking meters wherever it provides parking at airports, so the industrialists will have to pay parking tickets or patronize more distant commercial lots, if they want to have their car waiting when they get back. Message from Yesterday to Tomorrow: Merciful heavens, this brings back an older era when FAPA was a place where members really unloaded their emotions and minds in franker terms than they would use elsewhere in fandom or in any public mundane area. I seem to be the only one who still does it consistently, but it's nice to have company, particularly when it's in such an impressive format. I don't want to make more specific comments than that, because they would of necessity concern matters that are too personal for me to feel right talking about. Voyage: See what I mean about choosing FAPA members by making up our fine fannish minds, rather than depending on an antiquated system that was set up arbitrarily by some individual or other and later sanctified into law because it had become custom? If we hadn't petitioned Bill Rotsler back, we wouldn't have this, the like of which doesn't exist anywhere in the world. When will the time come when we vote non-members into the organization, just as we now vote former members back? Wraith: The law of compensation is wondrous indeed. Chauvenet drops his FAPA activity, Wrai Ballard gets married, and so we still have the tang of the sea and wind whipping in our faces through boat talk. The Staten Island Ferry is the most impressive vessel I've ever sailed on, but I find for any descriptions of sailing the same delight that I feel with any description of something I'm too stodgy to try myself. '' I always did say that the Star Trek invasion was good for fandom, and here's proof. Fans never had the energy and ingenuity before Star Trek to have their own fortune cookies baked. Sercon's Bane: Sign that 58-year-old man up for the next olympics. He must have been close to record time for the six laps around the lake. I can't find any eighteen-mile statistics, but the fifteen-mile record seems to be one hour, fourteen minutes, not far from the Seattle mark when you make allowance for the better footing on a running track. Goliard: Fiction in the child-slanted vein is one fannish preoccupation that I've never shared. But this little story seems to be a good one, after I make allowance for my personal blind spot, and it contains one perfect phrase, the definition of birds as "habits wrapped up in feathers". Vandy: Has anyone ever investigated the vanity publishers, to see if they could be useful to semi-pro projects originating in fandom? I have no knowledge of their fees, but I know some of their customers as people who couldn't afford extremely large investments. If a group of fans were thinking about a book whose circulation would be pretty well limited to fandom, but might be expected to attain three or four hundred paid copies, a vanity publisher might conceivably be a better answer than the agonies of negotiating directly with printers. '' Didn't L. Ron Hubbard claim

that he had found a way to hear flowers saying ouch when mistreated? It would be the final coup de grace for the Establishment, if the dianetics king had beaten a former CIA expert to that accomplishment. '' With air travel growing more and more difficult for all but the longest hauls, I imagine that eventually there will be tunnels built from the runways at airports to the nearest interstate highway. The business executive will wave goodbye to his associates as he boards the plane, they will turn to leave as it taxies into position, then the passengers will climb through an escape hatch into the tunnel, where a limousine will whisk them to the city of their destination as rapidly as they would go through the air and no weather shutdowns to worry about. The executives' prestige will be preserved and the sky will be less congested. The Devil's Work: Did I say "fraud" in connection with the Erbdom Hugo? I didn't mean it. I object to the Erbdom Hugo because it was a blatant example of bloc voting. I'd like to see the Hugos represent the impulse voting of fans. Niekas: I wrote a two-page loc on this enormous issue and hate to risk a duplication between that and these mailing comments. Moreover, it would be embarrassing if the two sets of comments contradicted rather than duplicated one another. Let's see if I can pick out some items I didn't touch on before. Bullfights, for instance. Did anyone else read about the spectator who sneaked into the ring and showed how gentle and cowardly the bulls really are, when they aren't goaded in exactly the right manner? '' I wonder if the true story of 2001's production will ever be known. I have the strangest suspicion that Clarke thought it would be an instructive, inspiring narrative of man's future greatness which Kubrick turned into another Dr. Strangelove. That could account for the endless variety of reactions to it: the fans mostly went to see what Clarke had written and the mundanes wanted to see what Kubrick had produced, and it turned out to be a film in which neither emerged purely himself. '' One of the great projects after I retire will be to go through a couple hundred prozines from the 1930's, list all the things the stories prophesied, and prove that only an insignificant fraction of one per cent of the total have been realized. Wollheim lists in his speech space flight, television, robots, mechanical brains, pocket communicators, universal aviation, messages from the stars, exploration of sea bottoms, worldwide government, and atomic power. Well, in those "dismal thirties", we had television, robots, mechanical brains, universal aviation, exploration of the sea bottoms, and worldwide government in some degree, although not to the degree they now have come. We didn't have space flight, or pocket communicators. We still don't have messages from the stars or atomic power in the sense that science fiction prophesied the latter, just a roundabout way of generating power with the atom which is fractionally superior to older methods for extremely large installations. That's not a very good score for a list deliberately compiled to show successes. +' On the future of the worldcon, I would propose: Retain most of the traditions and trappings of the present "worldcon" but call it what it really is, a North American convention, and keep it on this continent on the old east-midwest-west rotation plan. Establish a new worldcon in fact as well as name. Either adapt the Hugos or establish new awards to honor the year's best science fiction in each language with a substantial number of fans, emphasize creativity that isn't so dependent on language like artwork and films, and rotate this new worldcon at the outset among continental Europe,

the British Isles, and North America, with provision for breaking the rotation any year that Australia, Argentina, or some other part of the world can win with its bid. Stage the true worldcon in the spring, when tourist rates haven't reached their peak. This would permit the poorest fans to attend a North American con quite similar to the existing "worldcon" and would allow the richest fans to go to both the North American and worldcons. If the new giant Boeings have the predicted effect on trans-Atlantic fares, it won't cost any more for an East Coast fan in this nation to attend a worldcon in England or Germany during the 1970's than it now requires for him to go to a Pacificon. This plan would eliminate the sophistry inherent in the way English-speaking fandoms dominate the "worldcon" and could prevent a tremendous fuss if continental European fans decided to try to take over the existing con arrangements by force. We might as well face it: the disparity in size between English-speaking and non-English-speaking fandoms is narrowing steadily and we'll be outnumbered very soon. '' The Last Word is instructive, amusing, and frightening. I can't bring myself to criticize these extra-fat, marvelously reproduced fanzines filled with absolutely superior material. But I'm awfully afraid that they're becoming so expensive and time-consuming for the editors and publishers that fandom may enter a replay of the early 1930's, when the luxurious giants of fandom first discouraged fanzine publishing by less well-heeled fans, then collapsed of their own weight and dragged down with them a lot of the most talented fans of that era. Maybe the field is big enough today to survive the crash of the fanzines that grow too good to be true; I hope so. Helen's Fantasia: The notes on Japanese custom are fascinating. But they leave me wondering: how much of the populace do these things? Practically everyone, or just the people who like to keep up customs of the past, or merely a few hardcore traditionalists? Godot: If you can stand back far enough to consider intellectually the wrongness of "pig" as applied to Chicago's police, why not utilize that functioning mind and decide to avoid any name-calling of any kind? It's a meaningless noise, whether you say pigs or wild beasts, because it's obviously inaccurate. If the nation is on the brink of full-scale rebellion or civil war, this isn't the time to drop emotionally loaded epithets where they could incite violence. For an example of how to depict Chicago's police in words, I refer everyone to Bob Tucker's new version of The Charge of the Light Brigade in the new Le Zombie. '' The trouble isn't unions or capitalists; the trouble is men and women who are unable to cope with the accession of power. I see no way to avoid misuse of power, until we figure out a way to implant the right instincts into new humans genetically. Grandfather Stories: It's startling to find a fan with whom I've had so little contact suddenly revealing such similarities to my way of thinking and feeling about advancing years and race problems and a lot of other things. All of a sudden, I find my attitude toward Vietnam spreading to cover a lot of other major issues. I refuse to believe that the high proportion of bastards and fools in the human race will decline sufficiently during the remaining years of my life to justify any efforts on my part toward improving conditions of national or worldwide magnitude. Knowledge about the finer details of these problems will therefore do me no good. All I want now is to find someplace to hide away from the bulk of the population and the most immediate effects of its barbarities, a place where I can be around the people I like and ignore those I dislike. I don't know when I'll have the guts to make the break but I hope it'll be

soon. I'm sick to death of working for a living when every extra dollar I earn in a good year has 43½ per cent deducted for income taxes, not counting social security deductions on some of it, so we can kill the poor people in Vietnam and save those in the United States from going to work. '' Wouldn't all the post office problems be solved by ending the rate subsidies to publications? One uniform rate for all surface mail, whether letters, packages, magazines, or whatever, should do the trick. The post office was set up as a means of communication, and that function has been forgotten while the hucksters have taken command. '' This is the first advertisement I'd seen for the fan history, and the first I'd known about its price. I still don't know what the dust jacket will be like. Kim Chi: The worst thing about the current television season has been the disappearance of my favorite actress, Kim Darby, whom nobody else seems to have noticed, even though she was on almost every series once or more last year. By accident, I found some solace in the news that she is alive and well, and has been invisible because she has been making a movie and having a baby. '' It's inevitable that the black people have been acting this way. They're no different from white people, no matter how differently they've been treated. So they contain just about the same proportion of trash as the white people contain and the blacks will be doing as many stupid and ill-advised things as white men have done, now that they're getting a chance to be articulate. '' Amen and thrice again amen to the sermon on the Pierce crusade. One other point is that there's no point in starting these literary wars when the critics have barely started to do the work in their field. Fandom has produced just two respectable book-length manuscripts of criticism, Panshin on Heinlein and Knight's Advent collection. There are at least fifty fans capable of producing one or more works of specific criticism similar to Knight's, and a hundred science fiction writers need the same treatment accorded Heinlein at equal length. Once those basics are accomplished, it will do less harm if people waste their time choosing up sides and creating imaginary schools of writing. 520 07 0328: This number is growing so familiar that I fear it'll accidentally go into the social security block on my income tax returns with catastrophic results in federal computers. '' Bus stops aren't always bus stops in Hagerstown. Bus service is sketchy with most of it concentrated into the rush hours. Auto drivers know pretty well when a bus will need to use that red line and stay away from it then, park there at other times, and the police seem quite content. '' Someone else admits he's getting old. I seem to have angered a few fans by harping on that topic in conversation and in print, mostly those who are slightly older than me. But somehow I don't feel as conspicuous when I'm around a crowd of very young fans, if I've made it absolutely clear on repeated occasions that I am under no delusions about my status in a quite different generation. Without these disclaimers, I might be accused of refusing to act my age. Celephais: Suddenly I find myself eligible for four weeks' vacation per year, as long as I retain my job. I wish I could spur myself into a long trip like the one described here. But I can see, this early in the year, what will happen: I'll reserve one week for the St. Louis convention, just in case I decide to go, another for the World Series, a third in December for Christmas preparations, and fit in the last week whenever it's easiest on the rest of the staff. Maybe Heidelberg will jolt me out of the rut if I work next year.

The Worst of Martin

The fourth Contributor--and the fourth different size. (A 1000 apologies to the meticulous souls who bind their collections. Rest assured, my friends, 'Con', if it retains that name, will remain this size--I think...You have my word for it. Amen.)

The questionable artistic endeavors thrust loosely within are my first two attempts at lino carving. Please mention gently.

We admit that my first attempt at printing wasn't by any stretch of the imagination, a pleasing typographical masterpiece. It contained no erudite or fetching thoughts; still, we think it was worth more than one lonely card of recognition. On second thought, we may waive that card for its condescending sender was really trying to sell us something. We have one consolation in our mediations of publishing failure: Jaroslav Chmelicek. 'True genius,' blurbs the esthetic Chem, in the Fall issue of the ever welcome Mountain Trails, 'remains unrecognized until death breaks the thread of life.' Beautiful thought. And now let us leap blithely to the November Hisegesis. 'A genius,' burps the unrestrained Jaro., 'is only honored after he expires.' We perspire at these heights; and wonder why this inspiring reverie was reworded for the respective publishers. Practically above Chem's 'Barks of Philosophy' in MT, Mr. Adams has printed, amusingly under the circumstances: 'All articles must be original and previously unpublished.' Hmm...Sabotage in the mob.

The title page is FOUR colors--gold, green, red, and black--and the rest, 19 pages, are red and green. Truly Benton Wetzel made a 'printers envy' of his Christmas Couleur de Rose...The inevitable Edkins is strongly in favor of raising the NAPA dues to $2 a year; but after days of mathematical juggling I'm still unable to decipher how the increased sum would equal 'One and 8-10 cents per day.' ('4-5' would have been better anyway--). .0054794520547 ad infinitum, is what I get--a fraction over a half a cent. But this only makes Mr. Edkins's point a mite stronger. '--Anyone who boggles over paying 'a half cent' per day for the privilege of membership is either too fond of his pennies or not fond enough of aj.' I'm certain all worthwhile members can afford that infinitisimal sum. Otherwise they wouldn't be 'worthwhile,' for 'worth' and strength in aj is based on activity, and all activity costs money. Raised dues might help weed out some of the unknown 'bundle collectors;' an excellent idea. Why should printing members have to send over a hundred of their laboriously produced papers to members they shall never get or hear from. No wonder there's 'closed lists.' By all means raise the dues to $2 a year. Each group should seriously consider raising their dues for the 'weed out' possibility. Talking about 'dead-wood' why all this desire for recruits? My mind wavers to an extreme. Let's not recruit, let's get rid of the unnecessary members...The UAPA has about 500 constituents--haven't seen a bundle since God knows when. NAPA about 300--a big bundle had 19 papers recently. AAPA 200--23 papers last month. BAPA 150--continuous activity by a good third. And now the king of all, the Fantasy APA--limited to 50; the last bundle contained exactly 50 papers. Now there's activity. Have you noticed, as the quota decreases publishing activity increases? Let us not be too hasty about recruiting. Let us make entrance requirements stiffer. And let us start a universal drive to rid our crowded ranks of the hundreds of unknown 'bundle collectors.' (From The Contributor, Spring, 1939, issue.)

The Kingdom of the Keys

Every so often, I get worried about inconsistencies in the surrounding world. Nobody else seems concerned over them, and they are rarely the kind of situations that you can look up in reference books to get explanations. For instance, I've always been mystified on visits to New York City by the apparent lack of food. There just aren't enough grocery stores, supermarkets, and delicatessens for the millions of people who live in those boroughs. It is equally difficult to believe in the commonly accepted explanation of where radio and television reception comes from. All those vibrations floating around at every frequency, originating in every direction, constantly modulated by signals, couldn't possibly get sorted out by receivers. A third mystery comes to mind every time I see a filler item in a newspaper about sales of musical instruments. Pianos are still selling quite well, if you make allowance for their price, size, and the lack of any Madison Avenue effort to persuade the public to trade in a piano after two or three years on a later model. Are all those new pianos going into hyperspace, to be used on some unthinkably distant planet where some essential skill or material involved in piano-making is unavailable? Surely they can't be going into American homes, which are smaller all the time, are annually evacuated by their occupants who decide to move somewhere else, and where all the music is provided by electronics.

The last time I got worried about this impossible situation, I tried to find 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 appliance. 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 as semi-antiques after long visits in other homes, but they took up 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 neighbors 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, if I dispose of them, 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 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 catalogs, 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 catalog's classical music section seems quite spartan and primitive, if compared with the contents of piano music catalogs. Today, publishers don't offer quite as much as they once did, because four-handed piano arrangements have been falling out of favor. But you can still find the most amazing quantities of long-forgotten good and bad music in piano arrangements even in domestic music catalogs, 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 inadvertently altered version from a piano arrangement, as it does if 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 concerthall or theater, 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 mssic because I know it best, but I think that the same principle holds good in other fields. There is something terribly sick about the authenticism school, whether it emphasizes the right ornaments in Couperin's harpsichord music or insists that a white man can't write and 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 compositions, 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 difference 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 about 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 reconstructers of old performance styles do a lot of arbitrary emphasizing and softpedaling. 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, 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 for 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 musical 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 practice tone clusters and aleatory interpretations if I didn't drown out the conversation 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 has 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 bookkeeper. It came on a cold December afternoon, and its arrival taught me one of the first great lessons in patience of 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 largertoy 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 Horizons. 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 to play 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 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 halfblock: 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 that you are too busy a person, too concerned with the important things in life to acquire and utilize the plebian skills requiring motions of the feet or fingers. Or maybe there's a deepseated 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 and 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 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 it is 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 of 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 varieties of tone that can be obtained on a piano tend to get lost and to merge into one another, if there's too much air space or 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 in 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' catalogs. 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 Hammerklavier 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 meausures 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 marvelously in the mind as strokes of genius. The differences between the good and the bad compositions lie in the whole rather than in specimen slices from the entire organizm: 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 esthetics 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 neighbors 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, 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 mechanism which causes 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 1930's 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 kind of 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 careerdom 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 for 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 me 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 hands 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 sym-

bol 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-up 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 practices 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 scrapbook 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 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 off 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' catalogs by all that he wrote for the piano, for instance. But the closest thing to a complete edition of his works is available, to the best of 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 helterskelter, 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 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' intention. 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 dealers 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 conservatories 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 woman 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 me to concoct 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 barroom 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 the 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 jumping about 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, this organization contained a fair amount of musing about player pianos. Burb 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 smearing, the Hammerklavier'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 neighbors. 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 even was 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-sssurance and the ability to go through with a duty even when I did not feel in the mood, and maybe the regularity of Horizons over the years is partly attributable to those long-vanished little recitals. 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 staffs. 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 that 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 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 bit 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 not 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 Moz-

art-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 straiter 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 skeptical 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 mind. Then she could sit down at the piano and play her own 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 behavior. 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 running a typewriter, of course. If you learn to type by the hunt-and-peck method, you'll 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 is appearing 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-centered; look 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 favor 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 rag 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 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.