

RUMBLE NEWSLETTER

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Two records which have recently intrigued me are "Soundproof" and "Soundblast," both sub-titled "The Sound of Tomorrow -- Today." The cover of each is a straight science fiction scene. Surprisingly enough, the discs were cut by staid old Westminster. Duo-pianists Ferrante and Teicher attain fantastic sounds by preparing their instruments with special attachments to alter the resonance and texture of individual piano strings. The result is that the two pianos sound like a whole orchestra -- but an orchestra composed of instruments that will never be invented. This is an example of a type of progress which science fiction often ignores -- but a slight shifting of already-existing institutions can do more to change the way of life than even a passel of spaceships and time machines. Up to now, instruments have been invented at the rate of maybe a half-dozen per century. But with piano preparation and other methods still in the experimental stage, you can effectively invent a new instrument every minute of the day.

It is disappointing to me that they used 12 latin-american numbers on "Soundblast," their latest record. But the sounds are exciting, pleasing, and perhaps prophetic. The record company I just called "staid," has a number of other experimental-music records out, and in most of them, the results don't taste like a test-tube at all.

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I have two Varitypers for sale, one for \$75 and one with automatic justifier for \$110, each with three typefaces. Also have 25 typefaces to sell, either separately or with the above, at five to ten dollars each, most at the lower price.

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Good old Geis writes: "I like that weekly, RUMBLE, you obligingly sent me. I'm flattered you thot of me after all this time. I'd like to see some comment on current events in RUMBLE, tho. It seems to me that to ignore the rest of the world, in a personal zine that supposedly reflects one's interests, is...umm...well, I'd just like to read about your views of Sputnik and the near east, and politics and so on. SF is fine, but seems petty to me now. Besides that, SF doesn't seem worth much attention any longer, at least not much serious attention.

"Am reading The Seduction of the Innocent, by Dr. Wertham. Very interesting so far. Am inclined to agree with him to the extent that "bad" comic books do intensify and worsen delinquency, and can and do form a large influential part of the environment of children, some more than others.

"I'm a fan of Woodford too. Have his Loud Lamas as well as How To, and have read all his others." (Richard E. Geis, 1525 N.E. Ainsworth St., Portland 11, Oregon.

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Most of my serious views will be appearing in various editorial departments of Varioso. Only the ones pertinent only as news will appear here. I'm surprised that so many fans have read Woodford. He certainly doesn't consider SF to be worth serious attention; but then, there are few things he does consider mortally urgent.

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Ray Schaffer says: "I feel I should acknowledge the "Rumbles" you've been sending my way. All three enjoyable. And, of course, am looking forward to your weekly proview mag. It looks like we're members of a diminishing fandom, John, in that we still read (& enjoy) stf -- in contrast to the increasingly popular fakefan movement.

"Since you've been talking about G O O D B O O K S, I'd like to recommend one of a very unusual nature. Not by Bread Alone is a Russian novel about industry, written by a Russian living in Russia, altho it hasn't been pubbed as a book over there. According to the preface, a literary monthly there did pub three installments. Then it undoubtedly realized what more alert readers had recognized. The major character wasn't a party man -- he didn't speak proudly of the Soviet-supported schools -- he proved the stupidity and venality of a host of bureaucrats. And so, the serial was discontinued abruptly, says the publisher's preface. The book details the run-around that an inventor receives when he tries to present his new drain-pipe machinery to the Russian business world. He knows he has made something better, cheaper, more efficient. And he won't grease palms or pay bribes to get it tested. It's a bleak book, rather plodding in style, confusing with the Russian habit of giving each character a common name, a pet name and a formal name. But its cry is ever-present. Man must have dignity, be given truth and justice. I rate this novel high on my list of the year's (1957) best." (Ray Schaffer, 4541 Third St. N.W., Canton 8, O.)

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Hickman writes: "Gads!! 2 weeklies and a monthly -- you're a better man than I am. Would like to attend the Disclave but it is unlikely. Where is it? Springfield, Va.? ((No. Arlington, Va., May 11 & 12)) Would prefer Detroit for the con. Chicago has had it twice and although Dallas has a nice group I think Detroit could do a better job and I really think they deserve it. I want to go to L.A. but it's too far away to tell yet. Would like to take Dougie to Disneyland. Was up to see the Gibson's in Chicago this week. Joe was able to get me 3 J.D. black labels. Bless him. It's hard to get here and I need it for a tonic. Ha." ((Scads of Jack Daniels in D.C., at the insultingly low price of \$5.99. Sure you won't come to the Disclave??)) (Lynn A. Hickman, 304 North 11th St., Mt. Vernon, Illinois.)

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Larry Shaw: "Rumble Newsletter is great, man, great. I hope you do manage to keep up all that activity, though it makes me tired just to hear about it. Actually, I suspect most of us have felt like you at some time in our careers -- but I doubt if many of us have done much about it. Good luck.

"And how about publishing a New York edition some weekend?"

(Larry Shaw, 780 Greenwich St., NYC 14.)

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It's true, Larry, that most fans have felt this way at some time or another. Ghod knows I've felt like it plenty of times without doing anything about it. But, as I've suggested before, Rumble does more than simply give me the pleasure of fan publishing. By the end of the year, it will have provided me an excuse for about 60,000 words of journalistic practice. More important, it should keep me out of extended writing slumps, and get me used to sitting down to a typewriter with nothing particularly in mind. This is not to say I want to learn to write about nothing, but rather to suggest that this mild form of psychotherapy is necessary to break my habit of doing most of my writing in the form of notes, outlines, and other such ephemera. I have all the confidence in the world with a 3 x 5 card in front of me, but the sight of a typewriter tires me before I can expand the bits and snatches into something substantial. Once I get used to turning out a thousand words in a sitting, I hope to bring these confused stacks of cards & outlines to life.

In Cambridge this summer, with constant stimulation, I managed to fulfill my goal of 1,000 words of fiction per day, but here at home I keep getting interested in other things. These side studies are sincere, but often have a double motive of being an excuse for not writing. Things like Rumble take up some of the time I could spend on fiction, but at least keeps my mind focussed on writing. I'd say it gives more momentum than it absorbs, and my experience during periods where I vowed to write nothing but fiction indicates that writing anything increases your energy for more writing, rather than vice-versa.