

FAN-DANGO

Vol. II, No. 4 Spring 1945 Whole No. 8

The FT Laniac Music Poll of FADA

Despite the confusion attending its distribution (thank you, Mr. Shaw!), the Music Poll seemed reasonably well received and was answered by enough members to make the publication of results worth stencil space. I must confess that I am somewhat miffed at such sterling characters as Warner and Perdue, our two chief professional or semi-pro musicians, and those two competent pianists, Liebscher and Ackerman, for their failure in sending back their cards. Or, perhaps I should be miffed at Red Rogers for using them for some esoteric purpose of his own. Or (whisper it!) perhaps I should just be miffed at myself for not making a point of getting returns from these fellows that I knew were especially interested in music as an alter-hobby. Be all this as it may, I am astounded at the facility with which I am improvising on this stencil. Just think! Line 23, and I haven't said anything yet! If this goes on, I shall be accused of having come under the somewhat questionable influence of C. Edward Burbee, Jr.

Hmmm. We seem to have strayed from the matter in hand.

In tabulating the answers to the first question (choice of music), I was struck by the overwhelming majority of the 25 members who participated that listed symphony as their first choice, often without a second choice. 16 of the people (64%) fall into this category. Fie! For shame!

I listed six possible types of music: symphony, hit parade, opera, light opera, jazz, swing---following them with a blank space labelled "other". This gave a possible seven choices; in tabulating the returns, I scored first choice as 7, second choice as 6, and so on. If someone listed something under "other" and gave it a first choice, or if two or more persons listed the same thing under "other", I showed this item in the tabulation; otherwise "other" is being ignored except to enumerate the types of music named therein.

And here are the favorites of 25 of our most erudite FADans:

| | | |
|------------------------|------|--|
| 1. SYMPHONY..... | 142. | (First choices: 16, second choices: 3) |
| 2. HIT PARADE..... | 78. | (First choices: 3, second choices: 2) |
| 3. JAZZ..... | 73. | (First choices: 1, second choices: 6) |
| 4. LIGHT OPERA..... | 72. | (First choices: 1, second choices: 2) |
| 5. SWING..... | 68. | (First choices: 0, second choices: 5) |
| 6. OPERA..... | 57. | (First choices: 0, second choices: 3) |
| 7. CHAMBER MUSIC..... | 13. | (First choices: 0, second choices: 1) |
| 8. RELIGIOUS & COWBOY. | 8. | (First choices: 1, second choices: 0) |
| 9. CLASSICAL SOLOS.... | 7. | (First choices: 1, second choices: 0) |

These figures may not check. During their compilation, two little children were conducting their own personal whirlwind about my feet. I must own my inability at figures under the best of conditions --let alone something like my children in full cry! However, they are approximate!

I was especially struck by the excellent showing made by my favorites: jazz and swing. It will be noted that while my first choice (ouch!) for jazz stood alone, no less than eleven of you listed one or the other in second place. I was less favorably impressed by the low rating handed to opera. Or, perhaps I should say that its

low score failed completely to answer my pre-conceived ideas on the subject. (I'd have guessed that it would be second choice.)

I muffed the question about the phonographs. I had in mind some vague idea about contrasting the number of automatic changers with manually operated---a rather pointless survey, perhaps, but this is a point I have debated at length with many record collectors. (I much prefer the non-automatic, manual machines.) As the question was worded, I reaped a harvest of trade-names, and shall not bother to tabulate them. My apologies. In passing, it is of interest to note that no less than three of the 25 have spring-operated, acoustic outfits. War shortages?

Of the 25, seventeen have phonographs; eight do not. Sixteen of the seventeen maintain record collections; the discrepancy is caused by Bill Watson, who trades records back in after becoming familiar with them...or something. He is the one who has a phonograph and no collection, at least; my interpretation is strictly extrapolated.

Size of collection: (NY) 200, Searles 250, Koenig 200, Brown 250, (Medford, Ore.) 100, Swisher 250, Lowndes 500, Kepner 75 (plus access to another collection across the hall from him containing 300 platters), Tucker 50, Bill Evans 300, Lowndes 500, Widner 150, de la Ree 80, Anderson 150-180, Davis 100, EEEvans 100, Laney 750. Average collection, then, is not quite 250 discs. (238, if you must know.)

According to these figures, Doc Lowndes has far and away the best record collection of those in the poll. His first choice was symphony, followed by chamber music, orchestral, and concertos in that order. 500 records covering these types of music is certainly an adequate and comprehensive library, though I'll wager there are dozens of albums Doc is still drooling for! My own batch of 750 I will list second to Doc's, for the reason that it is obviously much less complete than his. Jazz and swing have been cut on something like 15,000 different discs since 1917, and, unlike the symphonic field where a new and better recording supersedes a 1925 waxing, the improvisatory nature of jazz makes possession of the old rarities a necessity if one's collection is to be comprehensively adequate. So I have 750 out of 15,000 and Doc has 500 out of...what, about 2000 to 4000? I might point out that neither of these top collections can hold a candle to that of the late Paul Freehafer, whose apartment literally bulged with the stuff. I would guess that he had at least 200 symphonic and classical album sets, plus a cupboard full of other platters.

Only four of the twenty-five play anything besides their radios and phonographs. Langley Searles and Chan Davis are pianists for their own pleasure and edification only. Bob Tucker states that he plays wax paper on a comb. Some pollists would have ignored this statement as being frivolous; Mr. Tucker's well-known serious nature and complete absence of a sense of humor leads me to believe that he probably actually does play wax paper on a comb. Posterity, take note. EEEvans plays drums and mellophone, and has done so professionally. Ten years in the Navy, plus city bands at Jackson, Michigan and (illegible due to a rainspot on the postal), plus tub-thumping at dance jobs. Though he plays no instrument, Art Widner has sung professionally.

I can visualize our FAPA orchestra! The piano quintet: Ackerman, Rothman, Perdue, Davis, Searles; happily pounding out everything from Bach to Boogie all at once in a hideous cacaphony, while a terribly frustrated Liebscher runs around in circles trying to find another piano---that scintillating bassoon obbligato by our boy Harry---that steady beat from ol' Rock and Roll Evans---those off-beat stabs from oomph-ing thru the rye Tucker---and, drowned out by it all,

our thrush, the Nightingale from New England, Yhos, trying manfully to make himself heard above the din! Solid, what? Entertainment committee for the Pacificon take note!

In all seriousness, though, I can't help regretting that more of us cannot play our own music. One does not need to be a good musician to find his appreciation broadening by leaps and bounds if he can do no more than stink finger around on a piano tracing progressions and dissecting chords. I know I wish I could!

Three members use music for background purposes only. Twelve feel that good music is deserving of undivided attention. Eight do both (and I extrapolate to say, "depending on the quality of the music and their mood at the time".) The reason I asked this question is that I find it difficult to do anything except listen when music is playing, even if the music is second-rate. Anything requiring mental activity of a higher order than dish-drying is impossible for me if good music is being played at the time. Among fans I have met, as well as among other people, this is rather unusual; and I wondered if the rest of the members contained a few like me. Roscoe Wright asked rather a poser in this connection: "How about dancing?" This isn't quite what I had in view; though in my own case, if I'm out digging a really good bunch of boys, I'll probably eschew dancing in favor of standing by the bandstand. More than once I've gotten so absorbed in listening that I forgot to dance! This is, to put it mildly, provoking to one's partner!

Four of the twenty-five disapprove of musical discussions in FAPA--too small a percentage to keep me from discussing it. Of the twenty-one expressing their approval, two qualified their yeses. Koenig says "fantasy music only", or words to that effect; and Searles refers me to an earlier statement of his in Fantasy Commentator. Upon looking this up, I find that he feels that a minimum of 50% of any FAPA magazine be devoted to fantasy, and the rest to anything the editor wishes. The other 19 affirmatives were unqualified. I asked this question with the idea of discussing jazz in most of my FAPA space, and intended to do so regardless of the poll, unless it showed a strong majority in opposition.

Perhaps a summary might not be amiss, but I prefer to present you with the bare results and let you analyse them any way you wish.

Two comments, however, should be published. Chauvenet, in filling out his card, pointed out that he could answer no question but the last one, but expressed himself as favoring musical discussions in the mailings. "...occasionally I find them interesting (even if obscure!)" Some of our less tolerant members, including myself, might do worse than to take a leaf from LRC's book. Willie Watson said: "Something should be done to popularize jazz (real jazz) in FAPA."

The poll was answered by the following individuals: EEVans, Davis, Anderson, (Los Angeles), de la Ree, Stanley, Thompson, Widner, Bill Evans, Tucker, (N.Y.C.), Kepner, Gardner, Fern, Lowndes, Swisher, Watson, (Medford, Oregon), Brown, Koenig, Washington, Searles, (New York), R.Wright, and Laney.

Especial thanks go to Alva "Red" Rogers for his kindness in allowing me to use his address on the cards; my own was very indeterminate at the time they were prepared.

Good listening to you all.

FAN-DANGO is a personalized publication written and published by Francis T. Laney, 1005 West 35th Place, Los Angeles 7, California. For free circulation to members of the Fantasy Amateur Press Association. All material appearing herein is composed on the stencil by the editor.

THE EXPERIMENT THAT FAILED

This issue of Fan-Dango marks a drastic change in its scope and frequency of issue, and might be termed a transitional stage, necessary to wind up the last few loose ends of my activity in FAPA. The things that are causing the change are many; probably the chief one is my desire to retain certain cherished friendships which I am sure to lose if I continue activity in FAPA. I shall elucidate this statement in a moment.

Fan-Dango, after two or three semi-abortive attempts to get in the groove, struck two issues ago what I felt was a fairly satisfactory groove. Each issue was started off with a lead article by a serviceman FAPA member; this was followed by a few brief articlettes by the editor; the bulk of the magazine was then occupied by rather elaborate reviews and critical commentary on the preceding mailing. Except for the serviceman article, none of this material was of such a weighty nature as to require any particular effort in its preparation, and lent itself admirably to being composed directly on the stencil.

It seems, however, that my writings are too distasteful to too large a proportion of the membership for me to continue to present them without careful and detailed revisions. I have felt (and see no reason to change my opinion) that Fan-Dango was a very long personal letter to my 64 fellow members, and that slight ineptnesses in expression, typographical errors within reason, and erratic statements once in a while were thus permissible. I have not felt that I was preparing polished material for publication, but rather that I was writing a letter once every three months. I have made many statements in other letters which were not as well put as they could have been if I'd revised them; I have also made many statements which did not purport to be a permanent exposition of my position but rather the reflection of a passing mood. Nor do I believe that in these respects my letters differ particularly from those of most fans.

In my 6th issue, I asked why I had gotten off on the wrong foot with so many of you. Doc Swisher, in "The Strange Case of Francis T. Laney", attempted to show me. I read these excerpts several times, and was able to find only four out of 37 which I would not stand by and if need be repeat. Of these four, two dealt more or less with the former feud here in Los Angeles, one was a bit too radically expressed, and one was simply pointless and assinine--one of the things one gets occasionally in any composed-on-the-stencil publication. Despite my inability to see something wrong, the matter bothered me exceedingly. I finally asked my friend Perdue to go through the article and give me the works.

Ah. It was a stormy little session, but Elmer finally got me to admit, with reservations, that about half of the statements were calculated to enrage a greater or lesser proportion of the membership because they told fans the truth about themselves--a sure way to antagonize anyone, especially those who make an emotional approach to their problems rather than an intellectual one. Oh, I forgot. FAPA members are noted for their intellectual approach to everything, aren't they? The other half, according to Elmer, contained statements calculated to anger one or more persons, or (if one were looking for it) showed evidences of an attitude of omniscience, an attitude, incidentally, of which I am not conscious.

The upshot of all this is that I find myself wellnigh incapable of composing for FAPA on the stencil any more. Dammit, I value the good opinion of at

least 95% of you, and after Elmer's exposition, I am scared to say anything for fear unintended implications will be read into it, and for fear that a friendly-meant, if caustic, comment will antagonise someone whom I don't wish to antagonise. To hell with it!

As far as I am concerned, this is the end of Fan-Dango, as you and I know it. It is also the end, temporarily at least, of my participation in FAPA as an active member. The experiment failed, and I don't feel particularly in the mood to go on with it just to show how bull-headed I can be on occasion.

THE NEW FAN-DANGO

If there weren't so many interesting magazines of permanent worth in FAPA mailings, I'd resign from membership, but it is just too easy to stay on the roll and get them all, as compared with the vast amount of trouble it would take to contact the individual editors and make some arrangement with them. So, I've got to go on publishing.

I am disgusted to recall my activity in behalf of greater activity requirements! Now I've got to give out with 8 pages a year instead of only two.

There are very few possibilities for me to choose from. Of course I could do like one of our more honored Brooklyn members and toss in some crudsheets from my non-FAPA publication now and then, but even I lack the gall to expect mailings in return for anything like that!

Fantasy and stf in its various ramifications is something I cannot touch upon in FAPA. Anything I write along these lines will go in Acolyte, and considering the low standards of that magazine (it stinks, but it fills up the page!) its rejects would scarcely be worth publishing anywhere.

I do not feel that I know enough about most of the brain-trust subjects to write about them. This diffidence does not apply throughout most of our membership, unfortunately, but in my case it precludes any heavy attempts ~~xxxxxx~~ at intellectuality. I'm not particularly "intellectual", and see no reason to try to act as though I were.

Matters of fan conduct and fan politics, Fan-Dango's favorite jive, are assuredly out. In the first place, I can see no reason to stencil and mimeograph like mad# to reach an audience of 65, when the pages of Shangri L'Affaires and Vom (175 circulation each) are open to me, and don't even make me stencil my own junk. Then too, I'm trying (despite the chip on both shoulders tonight) to get back in your good graces to a certain extent, and my remarks on fan matters are not the sort of thing that will lead to that end.

So, in the future, Fan-Dango will be devoted exclusively to jazz and swing. It will probably be an annual of 8 pages, though if I later develop more time I may try to bring it out twice a year. I will sincerely appreciate constructive comments from all of you, because I am going to do my level best to make of it a magazine that will interest everyone, even the ones of you who hate jazz and swing! I would like to know how I do.

TO RAYMOND WASHINGTON: I don't feel my attacks on you need any particular justification. I was fighting the Cosmic Circle with everything I had, and you were in the enemy camp. The tac-

ties I used--"Young Washington"--may have been offensive, but they had a noticeable counterpart in our last national presidential election! The Cosmic Circle is a dead issue, so...."Young" Washington is dead; Long live old man Mulli wups! WASHINGTON! Hope there are no more hard feelings, Raymond.

TO RANGLEY SEARLES: I'm through feuding with you. Your threat of legal action against me forced me to print an unpalatable withdrawal of my statements about you in Acolyte. I frankly don't wish to take any further risks along this line. Further, I question very strongly if either of us can ever convince the other of his motives, or get the other to see his side of the question unless perhaps from an academic point of view. We have both expressed ourselves quite fully; so far as I'm concerned the matter is a closed issue.

Except for a couple of points. Searles states on p 4 of "Devil Take the Hindmost" that I intended to copy his bibliography, and that he has a letter to that effect from me in his files. I should like to point out that there has never been any intention on my part of lifting Searles' work in whole or in part. The cartoon of this letter to Smith was written at the same time (as shown by the dates on both letters) as my letter to Searles anent collaboration. Smith (as director and coordinator of the "Great Bib") received a copy of my letter to Searles, and Searles (to save me some typing) got a copy of my letter to Smith. I had, for one reason and another, assumed Searles would welcome this collaboration, and expected that the collaboration would use Searles' previous work. About all I did that might seem off color here is to leap to conclusions as to the amount of collaboration Searles and I would do. Come, come; you do not think that if I were intending to steal your work I would send you written evidence of this intention? Also, I should like to point out that there seemed no valid reason to drag go-editor Russell into the feud by refusing to send Acolyte to Searles, and this is what ALS is referring to when he says I renigged on the boycott.

Along this line of boycotts and the like, I want to say that I deeply regret the feud between ALS and FTL, and hope that it can eventually be worked out so that we can continue our activities in the same or similar fields without further explosions from either of us directed at the other. I question if we could ever become real friends--there are too many diverse points at which our personalities would always clash--but at least I hope that we can refrain from further open war. I think my withdrawing from active FAPA participation will tend toward this end; further attempts at censorship, for instance, will be ignored by me completely, since I no longer intend to have any further active connections with the group.

TO THE FUTURIANS: I hope that your attempts to wreck FAPA meet with the failure that they deserve, and that your group of traitors--Vanguard APA--meets with the ignominious end it deserves. The duly elected officers of FAPA found they could not run the group into the ground, so like a bunch of pouting and spoiled brats, the kiddies took their bats and balls and broke up the game. Any other interpretation makes it needful to juggle the facts in the case as they actually happened. I value the friendship of local Vanguard members Perdue, Kepner, Rogers, and Saha far more than I value FAPA or even my principles of right and wrong. If I continue active in FAPA, and speak my mind about the Futurian swine (as I'd be sure to), I am convinced I'd mar or break these four friendships. This is the chief reason I am quitting active participation. To hell with our venal and unprincipled ex-officers!