

My anxiety complex is howling in indignation. I'm off to a late start in stenciling Horizons, Easter comes early this year, so the unprecedented phenomenon of stencil-cutting on Palm Sunday is inevitable. Reason tells me that the May mailing deadline is a safe distance in the future, but congealed habits consider stenciling a task that should be completed before Lent has reached middle age. If all this isn't too hard on my psyche, this will be volume 39, number 3, FAPA number 148, and whole number 153, the May, 1978 issue. Anticlimactically, I must announce that it's mostly done by Harry Warner, Jr., 425 Summit Avenue, Hagerstown, Maryland, 21740, U.S.A. The Coulsons do the production.

In the Beginning

The Fantasy Amateur: This is the November issue and comments follow on other items in that November mailing. It finally reached me a short time before Christmas. The envelope had been in tatters which had been mended with wide strips of cellophane tape imprinted "re-conditioned by U.S.P.S. at W.B.M.C." But portions of the tape had been torn away or pulled away from the surviving portions of the envelope, there were new rips which hadn't been repaired, and half of the mailing label was missing. It's a good thing there aren't many Hagerstowns because the state and zipcode had defected but someone had scribbled my zipcode at the bottom of the envelope, apparently on the theory that this Hagerstown is much larger than the other one in Indiana and therefore more likely to contain me. Fagelfotter's Monster: Local banks are getting technical about check-cashing, too. I know almost all the tellers at the bank where I cash payroll checks and some of them have been acquaintances for years. But I still must write my checking account number under my endorsement. Most local residents seem to have switched to supermarkets as the place where they cash checks and this has disastrous effects on the lines when you just want to buy a few groceries while five people in the line ahead of you are doing their banking. "The mention of tire chains seems odd. Snow tires have become so popular around here that I don't remember seeing or hearing tires on anything except a few large vehicles all this winter. Philistine Quarterly: A code of ethics for book reviewers is needed to cover such matters as disclosing a surprise ending. I feel it's wrong to spoil things for those who read the review first, while the book is brand new. But eventually comes the time when critics want to discuss an older book and the ending may be a vital element in the things to be written about. Should it be considered cricket to describe a surprise ending in print after the book has been available for three months, or for a year, or for some other specific period? Or should everyone try to avoid tipping off the surprise throughout all eternity, because there are always youngsters growing up and starting to read old books? "I know my dreams will give me much trouble when I retire. Every time I take a week or more of vacation, I start to suffer from nasty job-related dreams after two or three days of leisure. In the dreams I've fouled up something connected with the job, or failed to do something important, or otherwise disgraced myself. These dreams stop when I return to work. Presumably, it's a case of my subconscious failing to comprehend that I have earned these non-working days and it's trying to prod me to get busy immediately. Iris: It's odd how parades take on a life of their own no matter what they're supposed to be doing. The Hallowe'en parade in Hagerstown, reputedly the biggest in the Northeast at that seas-

on, was created as a costume parade, it's still called a runners' parade, but it quickly turned itself into a band and float parade despite everything the sponsors could do to promote the original concept. Some years, there are close to ten thousand people in the line of march and only a dozen or so of them are in fancy costumes. On the other hand, New Orleans seems to have acquired the kind of parade that retains lots of runners. Floccipaucinihilipilification: This was amusing and enlightening. But it's so long since I read it that I can't remember any comments I meant to make on it, and anyway, it's been upstaged by my unprecedented feat in making the title come out to the end of the line as neatly as it does just above.

In the Gums of a Humbling Gale: Too much editing is worse than too little editing. If editors had unlimited rights, all the Glenville Fikes of the world would sound as much like one another as Alka-Seltzer commercials do. But we're heading that way, what with the popularity of Reader's Digest book digests, Shakespeare plays edited down to one lp record apiece, and every newspaper identical in style and policies with every other newspaper in the nation. Editors have achieved all those prodigies.

Beds and Stems: I also keep candles handy for use in case of power failures. Then on the three or four nights in the average year when the local power company gets fainting spells, I always decide I'd better not light the candles because I might set the house on fire by fumbling in the dark with matches.

Just Best of the World: I haven't been in a poetry-admiring mood for many years. But I found more enjoyment in some of the pages of this than in many professionally published volumes of verse which I've tested from time to time to determine if that mood has gone away yet. One puzzling thing is the generally genial mood of these poems by Redd Boggs, who sounds so disillusioned and dissatisfied in prose in recent years.

FAPA Book: More proof that nostalgia can be produced by lists and tables without much of the purple prose often created to invoke it in other publications. Two or three times on almost every page I found something stirring. The appearance of Garai Ballard's name in the membership chart, for instance: just a few days after I saw it, I received a lengthy long distance call from Garai which further stirred up the memories which his name had poked up. The laconic announcement of the eta for the next SF Fifty

Yearly: if it appears on schedule, it could be one of the first fanzines I'll receive after retirement. ' ' Jan Jansen resurfaced for a while about five years ago. I think he's still active in European fandom but he seems to have severed most of his connections to this continent again. For that matter, has anyone heard from Nan Gerding in recent years? I think she was in a time of troubles in personal life around the time she gafiated and I'm concerned about her.

Of Cabbages and Kings: Natural forces seem to be seized upon increasingly as an excuse to camouflage greed and other nasty forms of behavior nowadays. If it doesn't rain for a week, news stories quote this or that authority in predictions of higher food prices because of crop failures. Haverstown eating places are ending their ancient habit of providing water automatically to patrons, just because water has been scarce off and on in some metropolitan areas. The more complicated life becomes, the harder it is for the little guy to be absolutely certain he's justified in assuming that such actions are as unwarranted as they seem to be. Grue: Maybe so few buildings have cellars in California because digging cellars causes earthquakes, not because cellars are dangerous in earthquakes. ' ' I also greatly prefer 35 mm cameras. But I can't break completely away

from the 4x5 format with which I worked at the office so many years, until I perform one last benedictionary sacrament. I must make good prints from several hundred 4x5 negatives which I sifted out from the awful stacks of junky pictures I took over the years. Some are valuable for sentimental reasons, others because I think they're good photographs. Incredibly, I have twice missed the chance to buy a 4x5 enlarger for a tiny price because I was thirty seconds too late at a pair of yard sales: in both cases, I saw someone walk over to the enlarger, look at it, and pick it up as I was getting out of the car. I don't want to pay a fair price for one because I'd need it only for the few evenings necessary for printing these negatives. Bobolings: But I did find one bargain, a Wollensak reel-to-reel tape recorder for ten bucks at another garage sale. It's identical with the one I've owned the past fifteen years or so, except for being only two-track. I'm finally able to duplicate tapes and to have a backup at hand if my old machine seems to be acting skittish when something I want badly to record is imminent. I still need a microphone with the peculiar Wollensak plug for it, however. Diaspar: I keep wondering if the current custom of criticizing worldcon committees out of habit, even when they don't do anything particularly worthy of criticism, won't some day create a situation where there won't be any worldcon committees because nobody is willing to endure the barrages. Something akin seems to be happening in politics. That Supreme Court decision made it almost impossible for public figures to find protection from the slander and libel laws; the protest generation of the early 1960's is working its way into jobs in the media where it's possible to sap public confidence in everyone in a position of authority, and now it's increasingly hard to find decent people willing to run for public office. "I must be getting out of touch with things. I recognize only about half of the names of presumably famous pros which Terry drops in his conreport. Crumbly Cowboy: Surely there's no sinister deep purpose behind a reference to England when Britain is meant or vice versa, no more than when I offend the libbers by referring to a dirty old man or scandalize an Eskimo by calling myself an American. Ecce Fanno: Teresa Nielsen's adventure with the juniper twig was vaguely familiar to me. I endured part of a similar ordeal when I had that sensation of something stuck in my throat in the summer of 1976. I managed to avoid the whole works by passing out in all-out manner partway through. The sensation went away a few weeks later and I thought it was scared away until it came back in less severe degree last summer. Now it's gone again. Apparently it's either some sort of warm weather allergy or an infection of some sort. If I mention the matter to my doctor now, he changes the subject. Dynatron: If a collector's item is something that is hard to get, A Wealth of Noble has definitely assumed that status already. It took months and several letters for me to get my author's copies of the second and third volumes. "Primitive man was undoubtedly much better traveled than he gets credit for having been. Excavations along the Potomac not far from Hagerstown into prehistoric Indian sites have shown evidence that ornaments and such things traveled hundreds or thousands of miles. It makes you wonder if early man wasn't more advanced in other ways. Maybe he had primitive forms of writing, did sketches to decorate the walls of huts, experimented with French cuisine, and did other things which wouldn't be easy to trace thousands of years later. Ultimate South: It's good to know that New York City isn't the only place where old feature movies are shown in theaters. After watching so many on television, I find myself wondering

why Gable, Garbo, Fields and the others have shrunk so badly in the past few decades. Interstellar Ramjet Scoop: Travel to other nations isn't very cheap nowadays for United States of Americans, even if fares are low. The decline in the dollar's value is playing havoc with the part of travel expenses that is spent in other lands. Huitloxopetl: If Leade likes opera without words, he could buy any records by Joan Sutherland with full confidence. The Rambling Fap: Gregg should be qualified to write some novels for John D. MacDonald, as a result of that trip. He seems to have experienced the same environments and characters that turn up in so many of the JDM books. " This might be the time to buy, if any real intentions to be a completist with the prozines survive. Prices of old science fiction magazines aren't too high, compared with those for many other pulps, if care is exercised on order placing to avoid the dealers who ask twice as much as most sources. In a few more years, I imagine, early Amazing and Wonders will be as expensive as Shadows and Doc Savages are today. " I've known quite a few persons who seemed physiologically incapable of surviving without alcohol and then went to jail for extended periods. None of them experienced any effect from the abrupt, long-lasting cutoff except better health. " A former Haverstown mayor has been spending winters in Mexico since he retired. He finds it far better than Florida. The only bad feature of the area where he stays, he tells me, is the behavior of a few other retirees from the United States. The Tiger Is Loose: The best argument in favor of the present system of extending FAPA memberships is the fact that it has been in operation for many years and I can't recall any big fusses or outbursts of indignation over the way it has worked. If membership extensions were decided only by one officer, not too many mailings would come out before there was a big hassle over an accusation that the officer's decision for or against an extension had been the result of personal feelings toward the member whose fate had just been decided. Separate official editors and secretary treasurers also seem like a good idea, on the basis of experience. There are additional considerations: FAPA is larger in membership than most apas and there have been stretches when its bundles have been exceptionally big, so combining the two offices would be a bigger burden on the holder than the situation in some other apas. Then there's the fact that combining the offices would cause both the funds and the magazines to become inaccessible, if the holder suddenly gaffiated, violently and permanently. It might be easier to survive a time of troubles if only the contents of a bundle or the treasury, not both, were lost. " Shoplifting is probably one reason the recording industry doesn't make tiny 33-rpm records to replace 45's. I've even seen claims that the disappearance of ten-inch lp's resulted from the ease with which women could slip them into large purses. " Only a few 33 rpm records weren't black when lp's were novelties. Different: The quotation from Lucian about writers who stretch the truth while reporting their activities sounds as if he had been reading fanzines from Walt Willis, John Berry, and others published during the great years of Irish Fandom. And with apologies for the somewhat truncated and delayed remarks on the November bundle, let us turn attention to the more recent February mailing, which not only arrived rapidly but showed very little evidence of having suffered nuclear attack on the way. The Fan asy Amateur: I didn't receive a copy of the allegedly postmailed Erg. Thoughts on Thinking: This is strange. Most of the poems are crude and yet there's an occasional line or series of lines which are quite effec-

tive. Barry obviously needs lots of advice on how to judge objectively his creative products.~ But I fear that mailing comments will be so fierce that he'll either consider himself a hopeless case or won't believe at all in the judgments of his poetry. Cognate: The figures quoted for houses for sale in Houston aren't as high as I would have imagined for a big city which is growing fast. Hagerstown houses seem to be bringing almost as much, unless the figures listed in advertisements are just starting points for bargaining downward. Somewhere I heard that half of all the houses being purchased by young persons around here are "mobile" homes because the conventional type of building is selling for prices that are almost out of reach for most incomes. I don't dare think what the "trailer courts" will be like after a couple of decades. '' The telephone company snafu is similar to the everlasting struggle between an exterminating company's bookkeeping equipment and me. I get bills for services which weren't rendered, I don't get bills after the exterminator comes, and no matter when I telephone the office to try to straighten matters out, the only person on duty knows nothing about anything, summing up the situation invariably like this: "Well, I don't open the mail." '' One odd thing about the popularity of Pluto over the years: despite all the publicity which the name has acquired, the Hagerstown Almanack, a publication which has a six-figure circulation over a dozen states, still hasn't begun to include that planet in its chart of the solar system. Through the Past, Lightly: The reference to how little money from that rock promotion really went to Bangla Desh is symptomatic. Every so often you read about how small a percentage of contributions to this or that drive for charitable funds really goes for the intended purpose. But the media never seems interested in the even smaller proportion of income used for good purposes at events for which tickets of admission are sold with the explanation that profits will go to charity. One local church sponsored a circus, members devoted several hundred manhours to peddling tickets and publicizing the event, several thousand dollars' worth of tickets were sold, and the net proceeds for the church amounted to only a hundred bucks or so. The pastor complained to me that he could have raised that much in one day of hard appeals for direct cash donations to his church on the telephone. What makes it bad is that so many people buy tickets to events sponsored in this way and never use them, having no interest in attending but just wanting to help out. Maybe 95% of the money doesn't serve the purpose they expected it to. Helen's Fantasia: The article on Alley Oop brings back pleasant if eroded memories of the long ago years when I followed the strip faithfully. I hope they'll produce a hardbound collection of the early strips someday, like the Buck Rogers and Little Orphan Annie volumes. '' Someday, somebody should produce a fanzine anthology of articles, sketches, and other material devoted to the clutter and chaos that fans' collecting instincts can create. Larry Farsace, long ago a FAPA member, has a hilarious advertisement in the current issue of an adzine, trying to dramatize the fact that it's impossible for him to prevent newly arrived letters from submerging into the mess before he has a chance to answer them. '' What scientific law causes the acoustics in a new auditorium to be worse and worse as more and more money is spent? A couple of high schools in this area, built for very modest sums by obscure architects and contractors, have magnificent acoustics in their auditoriums, and there's nothing but misery when enormous sums are spent on expert advice and fine materials at a Lincoln

Center or Kennedy Center. Not Much a Nothin': I know what Cliff means about disinclining to get involved in a feud after a bit of aging. This is one principal reason I've dropped Hagerstown Journal from Horizons. Horizons had been bobbing up in so many places that I felt sure it would soon find its way to mundanes in Hagerstown. I have been careful in what I've written about local events, I don't think anything has been libellous, but I'm sure some items would cause irate telephone calls if certain persons saw them. And I just don't want to be bothered with arguments at a time when there are so many other things I'd rather do in the years that remain. Grandfather Stories: I suspect that the art of laying sidewalks and other cement objects has been mislaid somewhere. Downtown Hagerstown has had a spate of new sidewalks as a result of alleged beautification. There are spots where one sidewalk fails to match the level of the next section by up to an inch, and in many places, cracks have begun to appear after less than a year. ' ' The Spaceways stencils survived into the 1950's. But I threw them out while semi-gafiated, partly because I'd heard somewhere that old stencils are highly inflammable. Meanwhile, I'm buying stencils in smaller quantities than formerly and keeping them in a cabinet under the sink in the hope that they won't dry out quite so rapidly in the low humidity which afflicts this house during the winter. But this quire seems to have deteriorated after less than six months storage here, unless this typewriter has developed the need for some key transplants during the last three months. ' ' Those postal changes are occurring in Hagerstown, too. Anything mailed here over weekends goes to Baltimore for sorting and dispatching, unless it's placed in two or three boxes in the downtown section meant solely for locally addressed mail. I think the chances of mail getting started on its way correctly are greater if handled by the Hagerstown postal workers. Allerlei: There's an old local saying which might explain cult movies: "Monkey see, monkey do." Meanwhile, since the public engages in these irrational crushes on certain movies, I wonder why theaters don't sell reserved seats in advance, requiring them to be used on the date specified. A person who waits in line for a couple of hours doesn't mean any more profit to the theater than if he'd paid his money in advance or by mail and had walked right in. Big Mac: No matter how "good" the editing may be in a theoretical sense, it will make me jittery and angry if it shifts viewpoint or perspective too frequently. No matter what the theorists may write about the rhythm of cutting and the dynamics of editing, I lose patience when nothing remains on the screen long enough for me to take a good look, and how can anyone achieve good acting if the camera is not allowed to linger long enough for him to change demeanor or make significant motions? The Speed of Dark: The Sporting News recently ran a column by Leonard Koppett, if memory serves, which deliberately carried to absurd limits the statistical analysis of sports events. As I recall it, Koppett proved among other things that the stock market rose or fell during a year in accordance with whether the AFC or the NFC team won the Superbowl at the start of the year. ' ' The quirk of reading periodicals from the back forward seems quite general among mundanes, not just in fandom. Maybe it started partly because magazines tended to put shorter items in the rear where most of the advertisements were, and the long pieces at the front didn't get read until the first evening that produced lots of spare time. Cacoethes: If I don't quit or get fired quick, I'll get involved soon with computerized typing which I assume will be a

distant cousin of the arrangement Dian utilized for this issue. If I survive until the new newspaper factory goes into use, its writers will use mechanisms which inform a computer what is being typed instead of banging key faces against paper wrapped around a platen. This will apparently cause a revolution in my life style, because I've been doing 90% of my newspaper writing at home in recent years. '' All I know about dollhouses is what Colleen Moore wrote about hers in her autobiography. I think she gave it to a museum in Chicago or somewhere for preservation. Horizons: Just a few weeks after I'd lamented in this issue my inability to find more than one Cornelia Meigs book in many years of hunting, I ran across two more, one of which cost only a penny at a fire sale. But neither is among the Meigs books that I read as a boy. Her literary career lasted much longer than I'd assumed. '' Someone informed me that Al was wrong when he listed Theodore Roscoe among the Max Brand, George Challis, and other pennames of Frederick Faust. The Roscoe stories definitely were not in the Faust style and spirit. The Rambling Rap: Burglary is something I've long considered inevitable and have dreaded. This house and its occupant are sterling examples of how not to foil burglars. Windows are large and low enough to be stepped into without loss of a criminal's dignity, the doors have glass in tempting places, and it's pitch dark at the rear of the house at night. I'm not home half the time and I keep one second story window unscreened and unlocked at all times, because I don't want anything to get in my way if I smell smoke in the middle of the night and find the only way out of my bedroom is via the front porch roof. There's little in the house which would interest the average burglar, except some photographic equipment and my audio components. If I can't find most of my old prozines and other fantasy rarities on the attic, a thief would probably have even greater problems with them. The one thing that bothers me is the danger that someone breaking into the house and finding nothing on his want list might get annoyed enough to smash up a lot of 78-rpm records or vandalize some bricabrac which has sentimental value to me. From newspaper accounts, I get the impression that 90% of the pilfering from local homes consists of coin collections, CB equipment, and eight-track players. I have none of those. Le Moindre: The reactions to video recordings are very useful because I'm still writhing with indecision on whether to invest now or wait until later. The freeze-frame capability definitely seems important. I'm surprised that all the video recording systems don't include it, because there's so much potential for eventually transmitting printed matter like newspapers via television. You could get as much real news as you'll find in the average newspaper in two or three seconds of transmitting time, assuming that perhaps 150 words per frame could be transmitted and recorded legibly. But I am eternally arguing with myself over what I should do. I'd better wait until one VTR system becomes clear winner in the current competition. No, that doesn't make sense because there are four noncompatible audio tape systems a quarter-century and more after tape recorders went on the market, and much the same thing may happen with video recordings. However, it would make better sense to wait until prices come down because historically anything new like VTR hardware drops in price as the years pass. Yeah, but meanwhile I'm missing all the things I want to preserve on video tape. Of course, but I can always trade for what I miss with other collectors. Sure I can, but suppose I drop dead while I'm waiting to save myself a few measly hundred bucks? Then look at it this way: I might as well forget the

whole thing until they send all the CB owners to the Yukon, because most of the things I'd try to record would be ruined by big mouths and ugly lines. Still, I could use a video recorder in the meantime on the pre-recorded movies and other features that are being sold in so many places already. But how would I find time to watch even True Grit over and over again, when I can't even spare a half-hour to loc a favorite fanzine nowadays? It goes on and on like that, interminably. '' I'm pretty sure local drug store soda fountains still sell phosphates. I can't find them listed on menus but I seem to remember hearing people order them occasionally in the past year or two. I never tasted one, because as a child I somehow confused a phosphate with awful chalky liquid which I was forced to drink before X-rays. Grue: I don't think age of audio equipment has anything to do with its susceptibility to CB signals. In fact, most of the commotion in the audio magazines just now is raised by people who have just invested several thousand dollars in first rate brand new components and are unable to use them because of someone's \$69 CB outfit up the street. A fortune in profits awaits the first component manufacturer who offers merchandise which is immune from the nuisance. But the manufacturers all seem to agree that the kind of circuitry which would remove the difficulty would also degrade the performance of the components. The Devil's Work: I ran across the legend of Courtney's boat not long ago in an unexpected place. It was in a book about abuses and commercialism in sports. The writer solemnly retold the old story as an awful example of how low sportsmen can stoop. The Gubbuan Saor: I hope those large book sales around Phoenix haven't suffered from higher prices the way some of those staged in this area have. I think I know who is responsible for persuading sponsors that they aren't charging enough, because this person knows much less than he thinks he does about book values and the pricing at several annual sales in this area seems to mirror his misconceptions. Interjection: One reason I don't often read professionally published books by fans is resentment against those books. Those books have caused their authors to cut back on fanac and I feel prejudiced against them for lessening my enjoyment of the authors' fanzine publishing and writing. Just think how many fine issues of Futuria Fantasia we might have had by now, if Ray Bradbury hadn't been sidetracked into writing short stories. But there's another matter. In general, and with some exceptions, fans who turn pro tend to be imitative and to adhere to the party line of the science fiction establishment. Fans usually have read a large quantity of science fiction, they often know a pro well enough to get help and advice with fiction attempts, and they normally have exact knowledge of just what the professional editors are looking for. Again remembering that this doesn't hold true of all fans turning pro, I think the normal outcome is fiction which isn't particularly distinguishable from that turned out by hardcore pros. It's the Laffertys, the LeGuins, and the Cordwainer Smiths who bring something fresh and different to the science fiction field by having limited or no relationship with the establishment when they started writing. I haven't read any of Jack Chalker's fiction and I haven't the slightest idea whether he's an exception; for this, I can plead only my inability to keep up with professional science fiction any better than I can keep up with loccing fanzines. But there is no doubt about the fact that this issue contains one of the most gripping and vivid personal narratives that FAPA has had in a very long while. I suspect that it is evidence for the reason

why Jack has had such an immediate success with his fiction. He has had a life much less bland than that of many beginning writers. He has apparently been able to translate into stories some of the ways he has reacted to his experiences. Comporoid: The era when a neo-fan can get lots of old fanzines for little or nothing is in its twilight stages. Some dealers seem to have established one dollar as the lowest price which they set on any fanzine they sell, no matter how obscure its title, how minimal the ability of its editor, and how absent are contributions by big names in fandom or prodrom. "Anybody who is worried about the matter can get around most of the pronoun problem by using "one" instead of he or him when the pronoun can refer to either a man or a woman. It sounds stilted, presumably because upper class Britishers are generally associated with this usage. But it's an equivalent of the way several European languages handle the matter. In French, it's "on" and in Italian, "si" is used. The Tiger Is on the Loose: I believe the worldcon on Labor Day weekend became traditional because it was easier to find hotels which weren't occupied with larger conventions, back in the years when worldcons had only a thousand or so persons showing up. If the conflict with school opening is really serious, and if the Fourth of July weekend doesn't come often enough, maybe a switch to Thanksgiving might be thought about. I believe most colleges and all public schools close down for that weekend, most employed persons get Friday off, and the weather normally isn't very bad in late November except in the most northerly cities with potential to host a worldcon. Foolscap: Maybe the description in the one-shot wasn't meant seriously. But I have always found Ted White to be a fluent and interesting talker, one who sounds in person the way he looks on stencils or types. I seem to have the strange habit of being a better talker on the telephone than in person: my diction improves and I seem to find more things to chatter about. Maybe those letters on the dial cause me to think I'm using my typewriter. Humble Opinions: I've grown wary about insurance on the contents of this house, after my only experience with filing a claim for storm damage. The company didn't want to pay anything for the television tower and antenna which had been damaged beyond repair when struck by lightning and battered by an accompanying gale. The adjuster looked in some reference book and found that they had depreciated to zero over the years. On the other hand, when someone shot out a couple of cellar windows, the same company paid without question the bill for new glass and its installation, even though the damaged glass was considerably older than the television stuff. "Executives probably violate laws for the same reason that the rank and file of employees drive faster than the speed limit most of the time, fudge on income tax returns, patronize bookies, and act as if the Ten Commandments had not yet become effective. Lawlessness is epidemic in the nation, and the Supreme Court has left government and law enforcement authorities incapable of coping with most forms of lawlessness. Celephais: Recently I ran across some old newspaper items relating to one of those commemorative coins. It was issued for the 75th anniversary of the battle of Antietam near here. The local public in 1967 raised thunder when they learned that the coins would cost more than face value, in order to raise funds for the commemorative program. Those who stuck by their guns and refused to pay the extra money lived to regret it, because the Antietam coin is among the most valuable of the commemoratives from that era by now. Crumbly Cowboy: I wish I could share the faith that Peter Roberts and some other FAPA

members place in reference works. But I'm afraid that they're as much the result of human frailties as any other kind of printed matter. Worse, hardly any reference work is compiled from scratch. Most of them rely for the most part on existing reference works and so mistakes get perpetuated endlessly. Then there's the lamentable fact that in some instances, reference works are based on arbitrary judgments by someone or other. A good example is the way dictionaries give instruction on where to break words that aren't complete at the end of lines. You can excuse a dictionary's decision on how a word should be spelled by the fact that it's the way most people spell the word. But hardly anyone except typesetters and teachers pay any attention to where the hyphen should go in a word broken between lines, and the spoken language gives no sure guide to this matter; in fact, sometimes it's more or less incorrect if you believe the dictionaries. I think most people say something closer to England than the En-gland which typesetters are supposed to obey. Of Members and 'Zines: It's hard to think of a new way to say each year the same basic thing: the feeling of gratitude that Peggy Rae performs this laborious and useful service, and amazement that she does it so well that nobody ever complains loudly about something which isn't exactly right. By now, the series has been appearing for enough years to make it advisable for her or someone else soon to reprint all these indexes in one volume. Such a reprint would be a most valuable tool for anyone who wanted to look up an item remembered from an old member, or compare activity levels against egoboo poll vote results (usually there's a close correlation) or do various forms of research. Bobolings: I feel more than ever like Lazarus Long, to see my life on that fascinating chart of who joined when. I can't think of any surefire explanation for the five-year sterility among current membership births. The only farfetched idea that comes to me is the Martin mess. It broke out just after the gap ended. Could it be that members who had joined FAPA within recent years when the trouble began were more prone to drop out and never renew membership than the hardened oldtimers in FAPA? ' ' Bob puts very well the sanctity that many persons seem to associate with the printed word. All Our Yesterdays included a clear disclaimer of any intention to be scholarly. I made it plain that I'd written something meant primarily for reading purposes, not for a contribution to the eternal verities. But every so often someone comes across an omission or a mistake or an opinionated remark and reacts as if he'd discovered a king of England who isn't mentioned in the Britannica. It's even worse in the newspaper trade, where you'd think the public would have sense enough to realize the dubious nature of any accounts of complex matters written by non-experts in those fields under the pressure of a deadline. Not only does the public jump on a newspaper blunder as if it were a criminal offense, some people also expect the newspaper workers to be founts of all knowledge. You have no idea how much abuse reporters get over the telephone from, for instance, school kids who think we should know if school will be canceled on a snowy morning, before the school authorities have made up their mind on the matter. There was also the idiot who had a nasty habit of calling on busy nights and doing his specialty. "Hey," he would ask, "can you tell me where Crazy Legs Hirsch is and what he's doing now?" The person who picked up the telephone would consult with the sports department, usually nobody would know, and when the caller was told of that fact, he would gurgle and chortle and shout, "Well, you stupes ought to know that old Crazy Legs is playing for the Calgary Cowboys," and hang up.

The Worst of Martin

Subaqueous Romance

A tough old villain oyster
In love with a shy octopus,
Would chase her through tunnels,
Under sea funnels,
Rather amorous.

And in her family cloister
They'd wring all their arms in despair
And shedding the big black tears
Broadcast their great fears
Of this strange affair.

And at a monster meeting
Of oysters and octopi
Oration proved the nation
Could only be saved by
Separation.

And now a lonely oyster,
Whose life and his love have a scorch,
Is actively pearling--
Internal knurling--
Carrying his torch.

One day the love sick oyster
Did find lady fair fast asleep.
A moment his mind slips,
Kisses fill sweet lips,
Naughty mess down deep.

Her reputation ruined,
She fled with her love disenthralled,
Far under the coral
Feeling immoral
Socially blackballed.

A court was held for judgment
And not a one would deny,
The oysters' flight from penance
Was anything than by
Lucky mischance.

The oyster found his lady,
They meet every day in the goo
No worries to ensnare,
Happy now in their
Hermitage for two.

The End

.....
(From the first issue of Satyric, dated September, 1943,
and published by Edgar Allan Martin)

King Lehar

The affinity of fandom and Gilbert & Sullivan operettas has often been remarked. It would be hard to be unaware of it, in fact. Fans make up theater parties when a G&S troupe comes to town. They create parodies on the operettas for performance or just for publishing in fanzines. Esoteric details of the G&S canon can be found in an occasional fanzine. Sir Arthur's melodies turn up at filksings.

So, it's obvious that the concept of operetta isn't too bourgeois and oldfashioned for fans to notice. But I've never understood why most fans stop there, with the Gilbert & Sullivan works. I admire them enormously, and yet they represent only a minute portion of the enormous mass of operettas which have been enormously popular in mundania over the past century and longer in many a nation. And there's an even more gigantic assemblage of fine operettas which never became smash hits of quite this stature, but either became famous in limited areas or possess qualities which the mundane public didn't appreciate fully. For instance, there are the operettas of Franz Lehar. The adage that all knowledge can be found in fanzines is shaky with respect to the Lehar stage works. I doubt if one of them is mentioned in the course of an average year in any fanzine anywhere. I know other fans who are ardent if slightly lost cause enthusiasts for Victor Herbert, who know many things about zarzuelas, who play their Johann Strauss operettas over and over. But they are scattered, compared to the myriads of fans who admire G&S. Even so, I've encountered nobody who loves the Lehar works in fandom as I do.

I can think of some reasons why this should be so. It's harder to see a Lehar operetta in a live performance, in this country and probably in other English-speaking nations. The anti-authority atmosphere which runs through most of the G&S operettas and must be one reason for their popularity in fandom isn't prominent in Lehar operettas. Sullivan's music, like that of Bach, is much better suited to non-professionals, whether they're trying to sing in public or just humming to themselves in private. A typical Sullivan melody, like many of those of Bach, implies its harmony and loses little if sung a cappella or accompanied by only a guitar. Lehar's songs are more dependent on his complex harmonic accompaniment, and need a piano for proper effect if an orchestra isn't handy. Moreover, Lehar wrote for the most part melodies which are hard for an untrained voice to handle. His tenors and sopranos may soar to a high B or C, and they aren't given as many opportunities to take breath. There's the language problem. Lehar's librettos aren't as consistently witty as those of Gilbert, and much of the humor which exists involves puns which can't be translated into English or near-forgotten circumstances of the past. Accessibility of the printed music is another problem. Much of Lehar's output seems to be still under copyright. It's hard to find collections of favorite Lehar songs or vocal scores of his operettas, compared with the way G&S tunes bob up even in collections of music for beginners at the piano.

But the situation isn't confined to fandom. Lehar's operettas in bulk never caught on with the United States mundane public as consistently as the G&S works did. I suppose politics had something to do with this. Lehar belonged to an unpopular language during two wars. Then there's the fact that Lehar's operettas seem to have had

no rallying point like that provided for G&S by the D'Oyly Carte organization. Operettas are chronically subjected to every form of indignity by producers, conductors, and directors. They are cut, the dialog is rewritten, music is grafted in from other works by the same composer or by other hands, sometimes the score is fitted to a totally different plot, and so on. G&S operettas have suffered this sort of treatment over the years, sometimes with fairly interesting results as in the case of the *Hot Mikado*, other times with gruesome outcomes. But there is also the D'Oyly Carte organization to keep an echt G&S available, performing the operettas almost as they were originally written. Lehar had nothing like this, and of course he didn't stick to one librettist for most of his career. One particular difference is dramatized by the recording situation. Now it's possible to buy discs containing all the surviving G&S operettas, music complete or with only minor deletions, sometimes with complete dialog appended. In contrast, Lehar's operettas have been the source of vastly more records than those devoted to G&S music but satisfactory complete performances of Lehar operettas are scarce and often unsatisfactory for one reason or another.

I must emphasize my fondness for the G&S operettas, and what follows isn't meant to imply that they are inferior to those of Lehar. But they are different and it's quite possible to enjoy the strengths of the Lehar operettas without losing pleasure in the G&S canon. One big difference is the basic fact that G&S operettas are extraverted, in a sense, while those of Lehar are mostly introverted. That is, the Britishers created cardboard characters and preposterous episodes in order to satirize social matters or to poke fun at humanity in general. It's impossible to imagine a G&S hero or heroine copulating. The characters in Lehar operettas, on the other hand, rarely are symbols for types and classes. They appeal to us as simulacra of real people with personal problems. A good example is the situation which closes the first act of *Der Graf von Luxemburg*. It has resulted from two gimmicks which Gilbert had utilized for different reasons. In the Lehar operetta, a nobleman becomes infatuated with an opera singer, but it would be beneath his station to marry a commoner. So he finds another nobleman who is thoroughly broke, and persuades the impoverished nobleman to marry the girl, thus raising her to the upper crust, and then to divorce her so the rich nobleman can take her as his suitably aristocratic bride. To prevent complications, this marriage of convenience is performed in a room divided by a partition, with bride and groom on opposite sides, so neither will know anything about the identity of the other. As the end of the act approaches, the count and the prima donna sing lightheartedly of their unusual wedding, and of the gap in the partition which is necessary for the exchange of the ring. But suddenly they seem like two humans thinking about the problems of happiness and maybe there's a mild dose of symbolism here without social significance, if we imagine the partition as a symbol of the many kinds of barriers which create problems in even the best of marriages.

The most obvious difference between the two composers' music is Lehar's strong reliance on the waltz. I can't remember reading any speculation on the question of why Sir Arthur was so reluctant to write waltzes when he collaborated with W.S. He used three-four and other triple times often enough, but very seldom is there any real waltz impulse. Several times when it does exist, the music seems to be a determined parody of the hackneyed sort of waltz mus-

ic, as in the case of "Poor Wand'ring One". I'm sure England was waltzing diligently all during the years when the operettas were being written. Maybe Sir Arthur considered it a dangerously daring form of music which shouldn't be enshrined even in operettas. When in doubt, Lehar writes waltz melodies. The "Merry Widow" is the best known source of them, of course (and I'm going to refer to that operetta by its accented English title, because of its fame) but they appear in all the other Lehar operettas known to me, usually at the rate of one or more in every act. Some are fast, some are slow, others are in between, but almost all of them have the distinctive Lehar aura.

Then there's the fact that Sir Arthur Sullivan followed different traditions in the way he wrote music. His operetta scores seem to owe approximately equal allegiance to Italian opera and to popular British compositions. Lehar writes in a style conditioned by the whole past of German opera and operetta. He is less apt to rely on a simple strophic form and his big ensembles aren't as closely modeled on Donizetti and early Verdi as those in the G&S works. Moreover, Lehar is more apt to characterize the major roles in his operettas through the style of music. All the characters in the G&S operettas generally sing the same sort of music, with a rare exception like *Iolanthe*: it may be lively music or solemn music, depending on the situation, but young or old, good or bad, they usually use the same musical style. Lehar in contrast follows the old tradition of happy-ending German opera and operetta, which almost invariably uses a main hero and heroine who sing rather heavy, serious music and a secondary hero and heroine who are much giddier or stupider than the main leads and are given music in a lighter vein. You can find this in such mighty works as operas by Beethoven (*Leonora* and *Florestan*, *Parzelline* and *Jaquino*) and Mozart (*Tamino* and *Pamina*, *Papageno* and *Papagena*). This sort of plot construction permits the librettist to divert attention from time to time from the main leads, through subplots involving the secondary leads, and it gives the composer an opportunity to vary the character of his music.

Occasionally someone grumbles about the cruelty which lies beneath the surface in spots in G&S operettas, and the fact that one of them ends in tragedy for a sympathetic character. But Lehar operettas are much more likely to have endings which are either unhappy or ambiguous. *Der Zarewitsch* concludes with the hero renouncing his great love in order to heed the call of duty as head of his nation. *Das Land des Lächelns* finds the hero and heroine separating irrevocably at the end. Practically everyone is totally miserable before the last act of *Giuditta* is concluded. *Zigeunerliebe* brings the hero and heroine into marriage at its climax but the things that have gone before leave the spectator deeply disturbed about its chances for success. The *Merry Widow* concludes in bliss, of course, and so do a number of other Lehar operettas. Those who want to enjoy things completely when they hear operettas may be turned off by the fact that Lehar doesn't indulge in the consistent happy ending that Gilbert always fashioned.

I mentioned previously the recording problem. To be fair to record producers, Lehar created major problems for anyone who tries to decide what is the definitive and complete version of an operetta. Lehar radically revised several of his early operettas, late in life, providing them with new titles and changed books. He kept writing new material for operettas which weren't subject to total

overhaul, usually when an operetta was revived or turned into a movie. There are fearful complications in any attempts to decide on the best version of an operetta. Does a late change represent an improvement? Was the composer forced to make a change or did he really want to do things differently? Ideally, we should have recorded versions of each of the operettas with this sort of decision made by someone fully aware of the history of the operettas and a good judge of music, with omitted numbers and radically revised other versions of numbers included in the set as a sort of appendix. The dialog problem on lp recordings is another knotty one. If every word of the books is recorded, it may make things tedious until the time comes when video recordings of the works will be available, but too much cutting of the dialog forces the listener to look into some printed source to be sure what is happening in the plot. I don't know of any Lehar lp recording which is totally satisfying in these respects. Too many of them omit several numbers despite the "complete" claim on the box, dialog is missing from some altogether, so skimpy in others that there's no way to guess what is going on, and in the best Graf von Luxembourg set, the bulk of the dialog is heard over musical introductions and bridges in such precise balance that neither words nor music can be clearly heard.

Another problem with recordings of Lehar music is the difficulty of finding in this country on lp many dubbings of 78 rpm recordings of his music. It should be possible to piece together original cast lp's of many of the operettas, with a bit of cheating here and there. But not much is available, and the great bulk of those 78's were never issued in the United States, so they aren't apt to turn up at flea markets and garage sales. One of the encyclopedias of recorded music temporarily abandoned all effort at completeness when it got to Lehar. It included an editorial note which spoke wildly of "hundreds, perhaps thousands" of discs which weren't included. But even the sampling that appears in these encyclopedias gives a hint of the enormous wealth of potential for historical Lehar records. There are six sides of 12-inch 78 rpm records offering the original leads in selections from *Giuditta* conducted by the composer, for instance. One of Lehar's least known operettas, *Libellentanz*, was so thoroughly recorded by an Italian cast that it took 18 ten-inch discs to market the product. There are tantalizing references to records apparently derived from Lehar works not included in the list of his stage works normally accepted, like "The Companions of Ulysses, musical story by P. Benoit". What did Elisabeth Schwarzkopf sound like, when she sang excerpts from *Paganini* in the long ago 78 rpm era?

The enormous number of records bearing Lehar's music brings to mind one misconception which seems to be too prevalent in English speaking lands. The accepted notion is that Lehar was a composer who got off to a promising start with *The Merry Widow* and then spent the rest of his long life in a pathetic attempt to repeat this success. In actuality, Lehar had written several other operettas before *The Merry Widow*, and most of his later operettas were stupendous successes on continental Europe. He became enormously wealthy, and if anything in his musical career left him unsatisfied, it must have been his failure to succeed with heavier music than operettas. He tried occasionally to write non-stage, non-dance music with indifferent results. He seems to have thought *Giuditta* strong enough to be considered an opera rather than an operetta, and it was given its premiere in fact at the Vienna State Opera. Long after *The Merry*

ry Widow had become world-famous, Lehar wrote a preposterous new overture for it, complex enough to serve as the middle section of one of the later Richard Strauss tonepoems. It's a good example of the way in which his symphonic thinking fails to jibe with the plain tunefulness of his operettas; it's worth hearing repeatedly as a curiosity in its own right, but it isn't satisfactory as an overture to a performance of the opera because the style is too disparate. One biographer made much of the point that Lehar outlived his world, surviving into an era when the operetta as Lehar and his contemporaries had written it had become irrelevant to the grim realities. But I doubt if Lehar really felt too bad about all this in his final years, because he had become a very old man who had seen his operettas have premieres over a span of 47 years, a longer creative career than most long-lived composers enjoy. Fortunately, he survived to experience the end of the Hitler regime, which had caused him financial problems.

Also difficult for listeners over here to accept is the way Lehar's music has formed part of the staple repertoire of many top names in the European opera world. In this nation, for some reason, we don't breed singers very often who are equally at home in operetta and opera. John Charles Thomas is the last first-rate singer from this country who comes to mind for equal ease in either field. But many of the Lehar specialists simultaneously carried on careers in grand opera and on the recital stage. For some reason which I wouldn't care even to guess about, fine Lehar singers seem particularly prone to be great Mozart singers. And at this point I'd better explain something which many persons fail to understand. The hero of The Merry Widow, Danilo, is normally played in a peculiar vocal form, half-speaking, half-singing most of the music. This has enabled many men with limited voices to become famous in the role, and it has caused some persons who are familiar with only this Lehar work to assume that similar parts exist in all his operettas. But the Danilo style is only a tradition created accidentally. In extreme youth, the operetta had a Danilo problem. The fine singer who had taken the role was unable to go on, a last-minute substitute could act but had only the most modest vocal resources, and the way he got through the performance established the tradition. It's one of the many enigmatic matters: since Lehar never seems to have tried strenuously to fight the tradition, should a model performance of The Merry Widow continue the old tradition?

I suppose the best word to describe Lehar's music is "sensuous". Sir Arthur Sullivan must have written the most sexless music since Beethoven. Nobody will ever try to ban Lehar's music as a bad influence on the morality of the public, but it's undeniably a mild stimulant to certain glands. It has always reminded me of Massenet's music despite the Gallic accent of Massenet's scores and the heavier milieu in which he wrote. Ernest Newman, one of the biggest names among British music critics in the first half of this century, once tried to figure out what makes Lehar's melodies sound the way they do. Of a typical Lehar melody, he wrote, "Perhaps the secret of its enduring fascination resides primarily in the way it evades expectation in the second limb of a phrase. It would have been impossible for anyone else to give the same turn to the latter part of a musical sentence that Lehar so consistently does." This sounds impressive, whatever its relevancy may be to the real secret. The explanation might also cast light on why Lehar so often sounds on the verge of writing in the style of much greater composers. The very

spirit of Mozart emerges now and then, sometimes remaining audible for several minutes before vanishing to yield precedence to the less aristocratic style of the operettist. One excellent example comes in the second act of *The Merry Widow*, in the ensemble passage which begins when the widow herself and Camille walk out of the summer-house instead of Valencienne and Camille whom Danilo expected. Lehar keeps the music going in wonderful manner with the simplest of means, just as Mozart did so often in his ensembles: in this case, nothing but a tiny and simple pattern of notes running up and down diatonically, contrasted with another thematic snatch built on the notes of a common major chord, something like Leporello's opening song in *Don Giovanni*.

The Merry Widow was the first Lehar opera I acquired on records in approximately full length. It was the Angel set from the mid 1950's and it's still one of my most often played albums. The cast is absolutely topnotch: Schwarzkopf, Emmy Loose, Nicolai Gedda, and Erich Kunz in the main roles, the nucleus of a sort of stable of great vocalists whom Angel featured in a whole series of about a half-dozen operettas released around this time. Kunz is a phenomenon who has never been duplicated in the United States. Imagine Sinatra as a singer who was also successful in opera, or conceive of Maria Callas as a vocalist who also was a favorite on Broadway, and you can guess at the status Kunz has held in Europe.

The Angel set demonstrates the potential limitations of video recordings of operettas. It's inconceivable that any singer appearing on your television screen could be one-tenth as alluring in her entrance as Schwarzkopf, who sounds cuddly, feminine, worldly wise, sexy, and a half-dozen other things, all at once, when only her voice is used to convey the illusion. Gedda sings the role of Camille almost exactly as he would sing a tenor role in a Puccini opera, and the character gains enormously thereby. Even though the orchestra and chorus are British, they sound born to the German manner. The famous "Wie die Weiber" male quartet plus chorus goes so excitingly and with such precision that it seems like an excellent candidate for national anthem of the counter-revolution, when that reaction against women's lib gets started.

But the libretto for *The Merry Widow* illustrates the problems Lehar operettas can cause for the person whose knowledge of German is slight or worse. Most of the humor doesn't come across for one reason or another. When Danilo claims it's asking of him too much to expect him to marry Hanna so his fatherland will acquire her fortune, he says that even love of country has its limits, but in the original German the remark is more amusing because he says "grenzen" which means either limits or boundaries, and there's no English word with such a convenient double meaning. Elsewhere there's a German paraphrase about the old Latin motto regarding how sweet it is to die for one's native land, in which "erben", to inherit, is substituted for "sterben", to die; there's no way to twist this pun into English. I doubt if many young persons today know enough about early 20th century European diplomacy to unders and fully the barrage of invective which Danilo hurls at Hanna near the end of the second act. It is based on the old balance of power theory of how to prevent war, and ends with a rather gross application of the once famous open door national policy to the widow's morals. But some of the niceties of the text come across in translation. Maybe I have a primitive sense of humor, but I nearly bust a gut every time I hear Camille remark, after his mistress has written on the famous fan "I'm a re-

spectable woman, "now I have it in writing."

Some of the music from *The Merry Widow*, like the waltz at its climax, is so familiar that we may overlook the radical things about the operetta. Lehar caused a major sensation in the way he concluded its first act. Operettas normally conclude an act with some sort of big ensemble number, or at least a lengthy duet or trio, summing up whatever dramatic crisis has been used to ring down the curtain. But in *The Merry Widow*, the finish of the first act must have been a real stunner to audiences. The widow halfheartedly tries to ward off Danilo's suggestions that they dance. Finally she mutters, "You horrible man!" He replies with an untranslatable German line in the general spirit of Popeye's celebrated "I yam what I yam," they go waltzing off the stage, and the curtain falls. No choral passages, no parts for other main characters, no simultaneous singing for the two principals, just the frothy waltz music in the orchestra and then a quick curtain. *The Merry widow* also provides an excellent example of the fact that it's nonsense to claim for the Broadway musical the invention of musical numbers which advance the plot and further the action. *The Merry Widow* wasn't the first operetta to do it that way, but it's particularly successful in keeping the plot developing by means of some of its biggest numbers. (The second most famous thing in the score, Hanna's Villa song, is an exception. Incidentally, I've never been able to trace down the facts about this song's words, but it appears to me that the librettists blundered. The song is about a supernatural creature of the woods, like the one in a famous Schumann song, but the word seems to be taken from the same source normally used to refer to supernatural creatures of the rivers and seas like those in the early Puccini opera, *Le Villi*.)

I'm not the kind of record collector who tries to acquire as many recordings as possible of favorite works. I prefer to acquire as many different works as I can. But in the case of a few favorites I cross the line. After years of enjoying this Angel set, I bought the recording which was issued in this country first on London, then on Richmond labels. It hasn't supplanted the Angel set in my affections, but it contains several musical numbers omitted from the Angel album and it has another superlative Hanna, Hilde Gueden. Then just recently I picked up a copy of the Everest set, mainly because it was very cheap and because of sentimental fondness for that veteran of operetta, Robert Stolz, the conductor.

Another in the Angel series with the same four principals is *Das Land des Lächelns*. This seems to be even more severely cut than the Angel *Merry Widow* album, although I've never seen a score and it is conceivable that some things in the libretto which seem to refer to other things which aren't in this performance are really loose ends left over from the revising process. Lehar's original version of this operetta had been produced six years earlier and performed as *Die Gelbe Jacke*. This revised version is a curious mixture of the old and the new. It has things which hardly existed at the time Lehar wrote *The Merry Widow*. For instance, it's odd to hear "girl" in the German text on several occasions. "Flirt" also shows up both as a noun and a verb. English words like those must have found their way into frequent use in Austria between the wars. Then there's the duet in the last act for Gustl and Mi: it's obviously an imitation of the American foxtrot in the style of the 1920's, and it's such a good imitation I'm surprised it didn't become popular as a music hall song over here. On the other hand, the score sounds more nostalgically Viennese in many places than that of *The Merry Widow*, even though the old Vienna was already beginning to show signs of wear and tear by

the time Lehar wrote the original score and its revision. This nostalgia element is all the more unexpected because so much of the score is deliberately exotic in style and instrumentation, to suggest the Chinese hero and the Chinese surroundings of the last act. Curiouser and curiouser, time and again Lehar uses the least Chinese thing imaginable, a solo violin playing in slow waltz time, to emphasize the foreign elements and somehow the effect is magical and convincing.

I suppose this operetta would be considered subversive if performed today, because its basic theme is the difficulty of a person from one custom learning to live with a person born to another custom. But the unhappy ending which results from Lisa's refusal to adapt to Sou-Chong's four other wives contributes to a very effective ending, as the Europeans start on their journey homeward and the Chinese characters watch them go, determined to let a Buddha-like calm save them from bawling. From this performance, I can't figure out just how unhappy the ending is: Are we to assume that Lisa decides to accept the wooing of Gustl when they get home, now that he has rescued her from her Chinese adventure, despite the way she rejected him in the first act? Or will everyone live unhappy ever after?

The booklet which accompanied the Angel album contains a strange little essay by Martin Cooper which seems to prove that the spirit of Rudyard Kipling still lives. Cooper contrasts Lehar's handling of the Chinese story with Mahler's *Das Lied von der Erde* without sounding too patronizing to Lehar. Then he turns around and calls Lehar's music "not wholly unworthy of Sullivan". The booklet inadvertently brings up bitter memories when it includes no picture of Gedda but one of Richard Tauber in the role of the hero.

Because Tauber was the Lehar tenor to end all Lehar tenors and one of the tragedies of the phonograph era is that his interpretations weren't more fully preserved on discs. Tauber made many records of Lehar music during the 78 rpm era but apparently he was never permitted to do the obvious thing: record entire roles in the manner of the 78 rpm sets of G&S operettas which were entrusted to famous performers. I've never even heard of the existence of full-length Tauber performances on early tape recorders or broadcast transcription discs, even though Tauber was still singing well in the late 1930's and early 1940's when many complete operas and operetta performances were being preserved in that manner. Tauber lived in fact into the lp era but his voice was probably too far gone by then to blame the industry for not tackling lp recording sessions with him. Tauber had a sense of style and a perfect taste which more than compensated for the fact that his voice was never as beautiful in tonal quality as it might have been. The next best thing would be a systematic reissue of Tauber records dubbed onto lp's in much the same manner as the pirated complete Caruso set or the authorized Chaliapin anthology. But Tauber made enough records to require many more lp's for a complete reissue than most vocalists would.

I've never seen statistics on the matter. But I suspect that the London recording of Lehar's *Giuditta* approached a world's record for remaining in a major recording company's catalog for the shortest time. It came out just before the stereo era began. I don't know if it sold so badly or if some other problem developed, but it was quickly remaindered and never has resurfaced. It boasts another of those big name barrages which big recording companies seem to

enjoy unleashing on Lehar scores: Gueden, Loose, Waldemar Kmentt, Walter Berry, and Murray Dickie, to cite just a few. But this is the one Lehar score which I know well that has failed to captivate me completely. Maybe part of my dissatisfaction is the downbeat nature of the book and the music. Lehar seems to have been trying to beat Kurt Weill at his own game in many of the numbers. I have considerable admiration for Weill's bitter qualities, but I don't think Lehar did the imitation too convincingly. Moreover, the score is quite uneven in both character and quality. The second act is quite inferior musically, and to make things worse, that act has next to no dramatic reason for existence, doing little to carry along the plot or deepen characterization. The last act in this performance seems like almost nothing but an endless series of reprises, although I may be misjudging Lehar if this recording did a lot of cutting. (I should emphasize that I'm not the only person who has found fault with Giuditta. It almost caused an international incident when it was new because of Mussolini's displeasure. He objected to the fact that the hero, an Italian, deserted from the army. Maybe Mussolini thought that all Spain's troubles in recent decades were the outcome of Don Jose going AWOL over Carmen. Lehar patched up the dispute by removing references to Italy from the book. But he didn't change the names of the characters, so it didn't take first nighters very much mental effort to guess where Octavio, Anita, Pierrino, Antonio, and so forth were supposed to live.)

Still, there are good things in the operetta. The first act is fine, probably the main reason why Lehar thought the work suitable for performance in an opera house. The hero makes a sensational entrance, bursting out in his very first singing line with a high note over a full orchestral background, then descending in a way that always makes me think of a passage in one of the tenor solos in *Das Lied von der Erde*. Giuditta's husband, Manuele, is the most sympathetic character in the opera, and it's a shame that he dominates the first act, then never reappears in the other four acts. Hilde sings so well that she makes the music Lehar wrote for the heroine sound more varied than it really is. And though it has nothing in particular to do with Lehar, I think this album was the first appearance of that enigmatic performer in several London recordings, Omar Godknow. He always turns up in tiny character parts that require little or no singing. In this case, he bobs up as Lord Barrymore, speaking the most English-sounding German that I've ever heard.

The difficulties that turn up for a small town resident who likes Lehar are emphasized by my recording of *Zigeunerliebe*. This is an old Urania set. This is another of the Lehar operettas which have no official version. It had its debut in 1910, then as a very old man Lehar produced a new version 33 years later, calling it *Garaboncias*. I think there is a third version, the one used for the first English production, but I'm not sure how much it differs from the other two or how much of the differences were Lehar's work. In the case of the Urania set, there's complete confusion because the booklet which accompanied the records describes actions and musical numbers which have no counterpart in what is on the records. Apparently the author of the booklet wrote his essay from a score or paraphrased someone else's description of the work, without having a chance to hear what Urania was about to put on the lp's. Only a few snatches of dialog were recorded, so it's impossible to guess at some things about the course of events in the recorded version.

But the basic idea of the operetta seems to prevail in all ver-

sions, and it's almost worthy of a psychological study. The details may vary, but basically the heroine, about to marry a rich man, feels an attraction toward his half-brother, a gypsy. She then dreams that she has run off with him, only to find that the bohemian life doesn't suit her. After she awakens, she decides she wants the rich man after all. The relationship between the two men suggests a sort of deeper conflict between head and heart, law and disorder, civilization and barbarism. Moreover, we're left very doubtful that this sudden change of mind on the heroine's part bodes well for the couple's future. The notes to the Urania records announce that the heroine awakens, finds the gypsy messing around with another woman, sees the rich man defending her against scoffing companions, and considers all this to have been prophesied by her dream. But it's clear from the records themselves that in this version, the dream does not end until just before the final curtain, and included practically everything that has gone before. A mermaid provides additional confusion. Mermaids are among the items dreamed of, according to the notes. But the recorded production causes one mermaid to serve as a sort of narrator, bobbing up at various crucial points, always accompanied by orchestral reminders of the mermaids' chorus. This sounds like something that would be difficult to carry out convincingly on stage, and makes me suspect that the records derive from an adaptation of the operetta for radio broadcast purposes. The credits show Radio Berlin to be the source of the chorus and orchestra, and the cramped sound of the records is similar to that which can be found on other Urania discs which are known to have been derived from performances prepared for radio purposes in the late 1930's and early 1940's. But it's hard to be sure of anything, since the author of the notes was either ignorant or careless enough to refer to "Land of Laughter" as one of the Lehar operettas. The German words for smiling and laughing look similar and don't sound too much alike, but the Chinese are definitely more celebrated for smiles than for laughs. There is more overture trouble involving this operetta. The Urania performance has no real overture, in spite of a vivid description of one in the notes. I own a London lp on which were dubbed some 78 rpm records which Lehar conducted late in life. Among them is a Zigeunerliebe overture and it doesn't jibe very well with the description in the notes, either. But it's much more compatible with the operetta than the Merry Widow overture. In it, Lehar accidentally or intentionally avoided the formalness normally associated with potpourri-type operetta overtures by grouping together some melodies with Hungarian rhythms at the start, then producing the Teutonic mermaid music and the big waltz hit from the operetta, and ending up with more of the Hungarian-sounding music, achieving a sort of ABA form.

I would be possessor of a larger assortment of Lehar operettas if I had invested in more imported lp's. But I've been trying to carry out my conviction that imported records are priced at outlandish figures by boycotting most of them, backsliding only when impulses go out of control. I couldn't resist in the case of Der Graf von Luxemburg. (The tiny nation's name is usually spelled with an o in books that refer to this operetta but the EMI album leaves it out, so I'll do likewise while writing about these records. Maybe the French use the o and the Germans don't when writing the nation's name. Lehar set a German libretto whose scene is set in Paris.)

One thing about this recording has no real relevance to Lehar but it almost steals the show for me. That's the presence of Kurt

Böhme in an important role. I don't believe Böhme has sung very much in North America. But he seems to be a genuine prodigy in a reverse sense. He was singing professionally already in the 1920's, these records must have been taped around 1969 or 1970, and Böhme's voice shows absolutely no evidence of wear and tear or of his advancing years. He sounds exactly as he did when he bobbed up on almost all the Urania opera recordings which I mentioned a while back, and as he did in the role of Fafner and the Dragon in the London Nibelungen cycle of the 1950's. He has a huge voice, a very black one, and he seems to have sung almost everything within his range, tragedy or comedy, big parts and tiny ones. Photographs in the leaflet which came with the EMI records make him look something like Melchior's old age, huge in body, but jolly and healthy looking.

Der Graf von Luxemburg might qualify as the second biggest success in Lehar's career, all things considered. I suspect that Lehar or his librettists deliberately tried to use the same formula that had worked so well in The Merry Widow, disguising the plot just enough so it wouldn't seem obvious. Both operettas are set in Paris. Both involve the problems resulting from a love affair between members of the upper and lower crusts, although in the case of The Merry Widow, the original infatuation between Danilo and Hanna had occurred long before the start of the first act and in this case it is going on during the operetta itself. There is the same gimmick of a marriage for the sake of a huge sum of money in both operettas.

Even if all this is just a fantasy of my imagination, the music of the two operettas definitely has a great deal in common. Lucia Popp is a splendid heroine, despite an awful handicap. Schwarzkopf recorded on an lp of operetta excerpts for Angel the big opening scene of Act II, even Lucia's excellencies can't match that standard, and it's impossible to refrain from indulging in an occasional sigh over what might have been if Angel had continued its operetta series while its stable were in their vocal prime and had put this operetta on discs. But Gedda is back in the lead tenor role in this EMI set. His voice isn't quite what it was two decades earlier, but it's still splendid. Best of all, perhaps, is the fact that EMI seems to have included most of the music in this set. I can't be sure without access to a Lehar know-it-all, but the booklet refers to the musical numbers by the numerals which apparently are prefixed to them in the score. This seems to show that only one number was omitted and only one included number was transplanted to another spot. But you never know with Lehar recordings, because there is a reference to one item as a "polka-mazurka", an improbability if I ever heard of one, and that Lehar-conducted London lp includes a selection from this operetta, identified only as "waltz intermezzo-ballet", which I don't hear in the EMI set. Maybe it's another of those later additions which Lehar was always cooking up. But the dialog seems severely cut, and I referred previously to the difficulty of understanding the portion of it which is mixed with music. It's impossible to figure out from the booklet or from what is audible on the discs how the hero became so impoverished in the first place and why he suddenly gets back his money in time for a happy ending. The booklet doesn't include a libretto, just a summary of the course of events and a few words from each number. However, the booklet makes up for this lack by providing a lot of unintentional entertainment in its English language section. The translator was having a bad day. "He will find his costs repaid", he translated when he meant "he will have his trouble repaid". Lucia Popp is said to be "at the

very begin of her career". One character "is so foolishly fond of her as to wish to marry her even". And at the conclusion "everyone finds the adequate partner". But the booklet's pictures are marvelous. I wish I knew why imported recordings always use illustrations that make the performers look human, while domestic releases insist on publishing pictures which have been retouched beyond the point of recognition. EMI even provided the booklet with full-color, full-page covers showing cast members in scenes from the operetta. This must have entailed much extra trouble, since I don't think the records were done as the result of an actual stage production.

There have been many domestic recordings of Lehar operettas in radically abridged form, covering only one or two sides of an lp. I've shied away from purchasing these, as a rule. But I made an exception in the case of an old London one-disc version of *Der Zarewitsch*. The presence of the magnificent Danish tenor, Helge Roswaenge, was the cause. Also on the disc is a very young Lisa Della Casa, who hadn't acquired yet the detached way of singing that has bothered me so much in her Richard Strauss singing.

Lehar seemed to have a positive mania for finding operetta subjects involving other parts of the world. In this case, since he was writing about Russians, he seems to have decided to make much of his score as sombre as the Slavic character is reputed to be. The smash hit number from this operatta may be the only big hit Lehar wrote which isn't either cheerful or fast or both. It's generally referred to in German sources as the *Wolgalied* and in English material as "A Soldier Stands on Volga's Shore". Whatever you may prefer to call it, the song is slow, gloomy, it sticks in the memory even if heard only once, and it gives a curious impression of having been a folk song in a previous incarnation. Whatever other things may be said about Lehar's music, folksong characteristics are not normally among them. One strange thing about *Der Zarewitsch* is the fact that never enjoyed a production in England, a nation which normally went wild over new Lehar operettas. The theme was a bit too strong for England, apparently: a woman-hating heir to the Russian throne, a young dancer who disguises as a man until she makes friends with him, then reveals her sex and makes arrangements to pay calls on him whenever she pleases.

The liner notes to this London abridgement claim that Lehar had more productions of his stage works throughout the world than any other composer in history. I can't find now the source of an anecdote I once read about several explorers who wandered for weeks through African jungles, hopelessly lost, and when they finally found a tiny, primitive village, the natives were doing their best in the largest hut to put on a performance of *The Merry Widow*. But what is apparently the only book-length biography of Lehar in English, "Fortune's Favourite" by W. Macqueen-Pope and D. L. Murray, gives a good summary of what the Merry Widow fever was like in just one small corner of the world during just the first few years after its debut. More than a million persons paid to get into the original production, which ran for more than two years, in London. During most of this century, there have been an unprecedented quantity of women in England named Sonia, because that was the name used for the role in England which was Hanna in the original German. Simultaneously, road companies of the operetta were playing all over England, even in towns so small that there were no buildings with stages, where a temporary proscenium was thrown up over any convenient platform in a town hall or corn exchange building. The hat worn by the

heroine was immediately copied by every hat shop in the land and appeared on almost every feminine head in England. The King went to see the show four times.

This biography, incidentally, is worth digging out for the sake of much information in its pages which can't be found elsewhere. However, it is hardly the big book about Lehar which is needed in English. Too much of it is concerned with British productions of Lehar operettas, consuming so much space that operettas which had little or no success in England are dismissed in a thousand words or so. There is also a severe lack of information on the music. Perhaps the best thing about the book is the illustrations: my 1953 edition contains dozens of pictures, so beautifully reproduced that you need a magnifying glass to feel sure that they are halftones instead of the actual photographs. In contrast, there seem to have been at least three big Lehar biographies in German, and one in French, none of which I've been able to track down yet.

One thing which the biography seems to show, a matter which I haven't seen contradicted elsewhere, is the fact that Lehar was a pretty good guy as composers go. About the worst thing that can be said about him is the fact that Hitler loved his operettas. But Lehar seems to have indulged rarely in the romantic messes, the dubious financial transactions, and the abuses of authority which most great composers have dabbled in on occasion. Maybe he was helped to behave by his comparatively early success, which removed all necessity for kicking and scratching his way through life. What happened with Der Zarewitsch may have been typical. The operetta derives from a play which was staged in Vienna in 1925. Lehar saw the play, wanted to turn it into an operetta, and learned that the musical rights had already been sold to another composer. The typical great composer would have gone ahead and set it to music anyway, or would have tried to bribe somebody, or would have commissioned a hack to write a libretto plagiarizing the drama. But instead, Lehar simply told a friend how he felt about the play, the friend told the composer who owned the musical rights, and that composer promptly told Lehar to accept the rights with his compliments.

Lehar may have been inventing motives after the fact when he wrote late in life about how he had written operettas. Even if he did, his remarks are a good summary of how he improved the reputation of the operetta in general: "I formed the resolve to create real people, and to depict them in such colors that they might actually have lived among us. They were to experience love and suffering as we do. Naturally I had to express this deeper intimacy in the music. I had, without realizing it, to employ operatic means whenever the plot demanded it." He seems to have been thinking along the same lines when he was dying. He asked in his final days for a statement to be included in his obituaries: "When I wrote music which captured the public I still had another purpose in my mind than just mere amusement. I wanted to capture the hearts of mankind and enter into souls. The hundreds of letters I received from all over the world testified I was successful in doing so and that my life's labors had not been wasted."

I don't pretend that a person who likes only rock music could find happiness listening to Lehar. But I do feel that any individual with more catholic tastes in music should give Lehar a chance to exercise his magic: a fair chance, that is, through expert performances, not an arrangement of the Merry Widow waltz for a first year piano student. Under proper conditions, his music is alive.