Don't let anyone try to tell you that this is volume 5, number 1, whole number 31, of Spaceways. It's guaranteed to be volume 40, number 3, FAPA number 152, and whole number 157 of Horizons, dated May, 1979, a date which impresses me as something out of a Gernsback prozine. Harry Warner, Jr., 423 Summit Avenue, Hagerstown, Maryland, 21740, U.S.A., is responsible for the stencils, and the Coulsons deserve credit for everything else.

In the Beginning

The Fantasy Amateur I never thought I'd live to see the quarter that brought such a respectable listing of the contents of a contemporary FAPA mailing. It almost makes the Mars photograph an anticlimax. I suppose the large number of membership expirations in February and the old tendency to put something nice in a February mailing so people will remember you in the egoboo poll have something to do with it. But there does seem to be a reawakening of interest in FAPA as well. I Like To Sniggle: The theft of FAPA publications from the JPL parking lot conjures up wonderful possibilities. Will the thief get rid of the evidence by stashing them in a Voyager, causing FAPA to be the first ajay group sending its mailings to other worlds? Or will some future program of communications with distant worlds need material to transmit, and someone will reach for the nearest thing, a FAPA publication which had been hidden in someone's desk, causing mailing comments and excuses for producing only eight pages of activity to zoom out to other galaxies? '' The Voyager Bulletins told me about ten times as much as I'd learned from the media about this project. I'm particularly encouraged by the fact that so many unexpected things were discovered around Jupiter and its moons. Maybe this will help improve the space program image, since previous projects to Luna, Mars and Venus had mostly confirmed what science had already theorized. Detours: The front cover is amazing: I can feel the illustration as well as see it. I suppose it's some sort of office copier product. If all fanzines were produced in this manner, I might figure out a way to sensitize my fingertips and read them that way, resting these senile eyes. '' There are baseball collectors' publications and huckster cons advertised regularly in The Sporting News. It would be easy to market the Cards' pictures through them. Complete issues of Baseball Magazine from the 1930's would probably bring $30 to $40 apiece but I don't know what torn-out pages might be worth. '' My determination to keep life simple forces Horizons to have 24 pages. I needn't keep track of how many stencils I've cut for an issue by simply using up one box of stencils. There's no danger of leaving one side of one page blank. '' A few autogyros were built at the Fairchild factory in Hagerstown perhaps two decades ago. A man named Umbaugh had developed an autogyro which he wanted to market as a vehicle for upper class families to use regularly. The official explanation for why full production didn't occur was Fairchild's inability to construct them profitably at the figure Umbaugh proposed as the price ($8,000, if I remember correctly). But I always suspected that despite the autogyro's ability to land safely with a dead engine, the little aircraft Umbaugh designed would be unable to cope with winds of any real force. Eventually, Umbaugh hooked up with an aircraft factory somewhere in the Midwest, where a hundred or so autogyros were constructed. The last I heard, some of these were being modified at yet another location. '' I've

often wondered if Hitchcock's best movies are easier than most films for a deaf person to enjoy. Hitchcock seems to make a particular effort to use no dialog at all in the important parts of his mature films. I recently saw a few of the almost unknown movies he directed in England at the start of his career and they're just the opposite, incredibly wordy. '' All Our Yesterdays was filed by the local library under 813, the Dewey number for books about United States literature. Moonshine: Much-maligned Ted White was, I believe, the first individual to remove his name from contention next year after winning a Hugo. It's too bad that his gesture has been imitated so rarely down through the years. I can't remember if anyone competing in the pro categories had ever indulged in this form of renunciation in the past. Otherwise, I don't find specific comment hooks in this issue, but I enjoyed immensely the fully detailed trip and conreport. They're growing somewhat scarce these days, and an assortment of vignettes seems to be taking their place. 520 07 0328: The spelling rule as it appeared in a schoolbook I used in about the third grade went: "I before e / Except after c / Or when heard as a / As in neighbor or weigh." '' I have an annoying habit something like Elmer's, of fainting every once in a long while for no apparent reason. The episodes have come at intervals of perhaps five to seven years ever since I was a boy. A couple of times I've toppled over on the sidewalk, once in a barber shop, once or twice at home. Tests for epilepsy showed nothing and it's been tentatively blamed on low blood pressure. Dynatron: I still don't understand why those apparent remains of riverbeds remain visible on Mars after so many millenia of sandstorms. No matter how much evidence scientists have assembled to the contrary, I'm going to believe in enough rainfall to cause occasional flowing of water through those areas until humans land on the planet and see for themselves that there's not that much rain or non-frozen water. '' The Uncanny Stories research isn't quite complete. There should be notes if any of the stories were reprints, and if so, from where. I suspect that the Cummings and Keller stories, at the very least, had seen print before. The Word for...: "Anything that you can have faith in and gives you purpose to living" could define philosophies as well as religions. Fandom is closer to philosophy than to religion in this sense. '' I was reading the other day a book about the Allies' secret agent activities in Europe during World War Two (for newspaper review purposes, not because I was interested in the topic). It described one way forged documents were aged quickly: they were thrown on the floor and people walked on them for several days. '' I suspect investment purposes behind much of the high-priced fanzine purchasing that goes on nowadays. It's hard to find a general circulation fanzine from the first three decades of fandom that doesn't have potential value to specialist collectors, since most issues contain something by or about a future pro or material on a contemporary pro. I wouldn't be surprised to find many old fanzine issues selling for hundreds of dollars apiece in a few more years. The Unteleported Fan: I hope I've remembered to write Joe Poudry about A Wealth of Fable by the time this mailing is distributed. For the benefit of any other FAPA members who may be wondering; Joe Siclari has made a real and apparently successful attempt to clean up neglected inquiries and orders for the book. He can currently be reached at 2201 NE 45 St., Lighthouse Pt., Fla., 33064. As of now, he is the only source of the publication, although I've been trying to persuade him to let one or more of the reliable

dealers handle copies. '' Panicked embarrassment at this point: I see and remember belatedly the fact that Joe Moudry mentioned later in this issue making connections with the publication. I penciled a note to comment on the page two reference and didn't erase it after I reached the further development later in this issue, then forgot the situation when I was typing these mailing comments. It's a nasty blunder after Joe said so many nice things about my fan history labors. Non Sequitur: Another convert to the ranks of those of us who have become more discreet in our writings because our frank stuff turned up where it didn't belong. I wonder how long it will be until science develops stencils which produce pages of apparently garbled words until read by someone entrusted with a decoder, like those cable transmissions of pay-to-see movies? '' I know there is a catastrophe risk for nuclear power plants. But there is a risk in every form of change made possible by scientific advance. The greater risk consists of falling into the habit of refusing to accept any developments of science, medicine, and so on because of fear. A stasis of that sort could cost infinitely more lives eventually than accepting such risks as seem acceptably minimal. In today's anti-science atmosphere, I doubt if penicillin could gain acceptance, because it demonstrably kills a few persons who react badly to it. Meanwhile, hundreds of thousands of North Americans die because the energies which go into opposing change aren't being channeled to such purposes as wiping out drunk driving and smoking. All it would require to keep alive fifty thousand persons who die annually from alcohol-connected highway accidents is a regular, consistent program of spot checks at random times and places on highways, requring each driver contacted to take a breathalyzer test, with automatic three-year driver's license suspension if he's found to be over the alcohol limit and permanent loss of license plus a prison term for a second offense. It's against the law to fire a gun indiscriminately in cities even if nobody is hit. It doesn't make sense to penalize drunk drivers only after they've caused accidents. The Whole Fanzine Catalog: Unfortunately, I couldn't bear to read all of this. It's not Brian Earl Brown's fault, but mine. I've failed to write so many locs in the past couple of years that any set of fanzine reviews is destined to cause me to suffer violent remorse attacks, just from being reminded that I've not written about most of the issues described in the reviews. Ornithopter: The Ode to Ornithopters might be sold to Haband Company for an imposing sum. It would be ideal for the firm to use in connection with its mail order peddling of its trousers. '' And for the second time in this mailing, I find no other comment hooks on a lot of pages that were most enjoyable to read and by all the laws of fannish ethics and morality should create lengthy mailing comments. '' The Devil's Work: I recently acquired a book published not too long ago by apparently the same Ted Roscoe who wrote for Argosy and whom Al Ashley inadvertently killed off along with all the Frederick Faust pennames. It's only semi-fiction, however, a disguised retelling of a New England murder mystery from real life. I wish someone would publish a collection of Roscoe's fiction. '' I must have sold to six or seven prozine editors during my brief appearance as a filthy pro two decades ago. Of them all, Gold was the only one who didn't make any changes in my manuscript that I could notice without referring to my carbon copies. '' Some of those political novels set in the near future must be alternate universe stories, even if not identified as such. The ones that use fictional names for members of Congress would need

an alternate universe for references to committee chairmen, who under the seniority system would need to be congressmen today to attain the chairmanships in time for a real world novel set in the immediate future. It's also hard to create a fictional President for a novel set in the immediate future without giving him a past record which is demonstrably non-existent today; a person who is totally obscure today isn't apt to gain a presidency until he has had perhaps twenty years in which to rise to prominence through achievements and posts held. The Speed of Dark: I've already commented on some of the material in this issue as a result of its previous publication elsewhere. As I remember it, my main reaction to the account of the Lord of the Rings line was amazement that things are so interesting for persons standing in line in big cities. It's the dullest possible activity in Hagerstown, enlivened only by the fits of coughing from persons in line of fire from smokers and by the little old ladies who invariably try to crash the line. Cognate: I experience the same sense of lessened loneliness that Rosemary describes on the most improbable occasions. Listening to thrice-familiar operas when nobody is around can cause me to feel as if I've encountered again a group of old acquaintances. I also have a strange sense of being back home when I arrive at the sections in nearby towns that I know best. I don't go there often enough to know many of the people who live and work there but the recognition of streets and buildings seems to substitute somehow. '' Eric Mayer and Mae Strelkov are the only fans known to me who have used hektographs extensively in the past few years. But I don't think Mae publishes regularly any longer and Eric has just defected to a ditto machine. If Rosemary wants to do her own running-off, and will be publishing only occasional small zines, she might be happier with a liquid ink mimeograph rather than a Gestetner. Less complicated, the initial cost is lower, and less weight in case it's necessary to lug the thing back to the shop for service. From Sunday to Saturday: But there's nothing that prevents FAPA members from publishing material by spouses, roommates, liaison members, or anyone else who seems to be disadvantaged by defeat of the joint membership amendment. What does the joint membership amount to, after all, but the presence of two names on the Fantasy Amateur membership roster? Under present regulations, FAPA is free from the monumental disputes that joint memberships for non-married people would create over definitions of a lasting liaison, who gets the membership if there's a splitup, how long the joint membership can be held if there's a temporary splitup, why three or more persons can't share a joint membership, whether siblings or parent-child joint memberships can be held, and so on. The Dregs of Summer: I doubt if I'll ever be able to tell how I spent my summer vacation. There are too many reasons not to take it in the summer. By cold logic, I should take it in January, so I'll be sure to have had it in case I'm destined to drop dead in the next few weeks. Psychologically and physically, I should take it in December, partly because I'll never face a stretch of months to come with no vacation time due me and partly because this permits me to avoid work duties in weeks when the weather often makes it hard to get around. '' Mercy, I didn't know it was that hard to get X-rays. A Hagerstown doctor keeps his in a shed behind his office not far from where I work, and rarely bothersm to close the door in warm weather. Apparently the sort of passion that Thomas Mann described in The Magic Mountain, causing the hero to want to see his girl friend's insides, doesn't exist in Hagerstown, because nobody ever

seems to disturb them. Damballa: Something symbolic happened last fall. I didn't buy one of those newsstand magazines summarizing the forthcoming college football season and another one dealing with the professional season. My interest in football has been sagging for the past fifteen years or so, I rarely watched a game from start to finish last season, I can't bring myself to root for any teams any more, but I'd continued to buy those yearbooks each fall and stash them unread on the attic out of force of habit and from the thought that it's a shame to break a file of them extending over quite a few years. '' The Haunting was a theater movie, which later turned up on television, not one made for the tube. It was released in 1963, starring Julie Harris, and based on the Shirley Jackson story. '' One slight problem with UPS delivery of FAPA mailings might be peculiar to Hagerstown or nationwide. The delivery man here won't leave a parcel inside the storm door, as the parcel post man does, but asks a neighbor to accept it and give it to me. I'm rarely home when parcels come and I feel uncomfortable about UPS deliveries in the winter, because the first floor inhabitants on both sides of me are very old people who could suffer a bad fall bringing such a package to me later in the day when it's snowing or icy. '' I've been taping an average of 90 or 120 minutes of old radio most Sunday evenings. By good luck, two public broadcasting stations in the Washington area that are easier picked here than most distant FM stations are programming six consecutive hours of old radio between them each Sunday. Included have been some unusual things: several rehearsals of network drama hours instead of the broadcasts themselves, Arthur Godfrey on a Washington station before he went network, and a two-hour retrospective on Vic and Sade combining daily episodes and recollections of surviving cast members. Reruns of old radio have special importance to me because I worked six nights a week from 1942 onward and missed the last decade or so of the golden age, for all intents and purposes. Iguanacon Blues Redux: I'd better keep quiet. Worldcon committees and NFFF constitutional changes are two matters which it just isn't safe to write or talk about. Mumble Gutter: I believe the early Avengers episodes which haven't been shown in the United States were those with Honor Blackman as Steed's partner. '' What evidence exists that most families enjoy detective and police shows on television in preference to other types? The most recent surveys I've seen are a Good Housekeeping poll of its readers, which put only one such series, Quincy, among the ten favorite, and the latest Nielsen ratings, in which no police-detective series or movie finished better than fifteenth. The ratings on the entire 1977-78 season showed a remarkably large number of such shows finishing far down in the ratings. And yet perhaps forty per cent of the non-news network offerings after 8 p.m. in the eastern time zone are series and movies based on crime, and I'd estimate that half of them depict police, judges, attorneys and other authorities as either the crooks or idiots. DNQ: Attempts to list the best fanzines of all time are usually handicapped by the individual's unfamiliarity with lots of good ones and inability to read other fine ones. Franz Rottensteiner's Quarber Merkur would have a reputation approximating that of Fantasy Commentator if enough fans had the thorough command of German it requires. Fantasy Magazine had lots of merit, but how many people active in fandom today have seen more than one or two issues? West from Swiss Cheese: This gave me the quivers because it made me feel all over again the miseries I had last fall with squirrels on the

attic. One of the Havahart traps which Dian mentions finally produced relief where rat traps and poison had failed. Anyone who wants to do live trapping of any kind of pest and can't find these humane devices nearby can get information from the catalog of Audubon Workshop, 1501 Paddock Dr., Northbrook, Ill., 60062. Pizzas of Eight: Every five years or so, something in FAPA impels me to repeat my mystification over my failure to acquire a nickname in fandom. I must be the only fan people call by his given name, unchanged. And I haven't had a nickname in the mundane world since I was a child. What the Dormouse Said: Unsung in fandom is the way photography has improved. Pictures of fans used to show them staring blankly at the camera. Most pictures I see nowadays are much better, showing the fans looking happy or doing something, like the splendid collection in this issue. Quantum Sufficit: It would be nice if we could find politicians who didn't glean some money on the sly for themselves. It would also be nice if teachers never made a mistake during classes, if bank employes never embezzled, if parents were the perfect people they seem to three-year-old children. But this is the real world with fallible humans as the only creatures on hand for such posts. Government will be in trouble if it isn't run by people who know how to govern, not by those with no known blotches on their escutcheons. '' I probably average one hour daily on fanac over the long run. Grandfather Stories: Somehow, Hagerstown has just been blessed with a fine second-hand book store, its first in more than a quarter-century. Prices are stiff but not outrageous, the men running it know and love books, and I'm spending more than I should in an effort to help keep it going. Tekeli-Li: One reason the recent violences of nature haven't wiped out North American mankind is that the media have exaggerated them shamefully. "Record" seems to appear in every other story about the weather. Ego Tripping in LA: I know customers sometimes try to evade honesty, such as magazine editors, in dealings with photographers. But there are some photographers with dubious practices, too. We had one working for the local newspapers who did a lot of copying on the side of wedding pictures taken by local studios: he supplied more copies to the happy couples for a cut rate. Celephais: I thought it would be strange to watch Shirley Verrett singing Tosca, but I didn't notice after the first few minutes, even though certain things in the libretto seemed odd under the circumstances. Interjection: Jack Chalker seems not to realize that he isn't far from another Doubleday plant, at Smithsburg. Someone should get up a fund to get Tucker to travel from Hanover to Smithsburg, in the hope of finding that famous missing final page from a novel. Of Members and 'Zines: Again most useful. The only bad thing isn't Peggy's fault: it's the way it reveals how little some of the best writers in FAPA did in 1978. Le Moindre: I've just heard another horror story of library discards in a medium-sized Pennsylvania town. These books were thrown on the dump, including genuine rarities. "We want a modern library" was the explanation. Of Cabbages and Kings: It sounds very much as if a television network has begun to arrange Peggy Rae's life. These strange things can be explained only as test episodes for a new series. The Rambling Fap: I doubt if two weeks is a long enough test for that new way of life. Gregg seems too young to settle permanently into this sort of existence. It might be safer to figure out a way to knock off for six months and test the simple life over that span with ability to return to civilization if it starts to bore.

Tara Raboomdeyay

Once a year, I blow myself to the treat of writing in Horizons on one topic which really interests me, music. For a while, I was planning to make this year's essay a study of the most famous operatic version of Goethe's Faust, which I would have entitled The Gounod Show. Then I realized I'd really rather write about a Wagner opera, and made elaborate plans for an analysis of his only mature comedy, whose title would naturally have been Sachs and the Single Girl. But my attention span no longer stretches out as far as it once did. So it seems safer to indulge this time on a variety of more or less unrelated ramblings.

I watched the second television showing of Gone with the Wind a few weeks back. This time, I paid more attention to the music than I did the first time it was on the tube. So I started to think more intently about a topic which has long intrigued me: the nostalgia quality of some music. The melody which is most famous from Max Steiner's score is the theme associated with Tara and sometimes also seems to symbolize the Old South in general or the concept of home in an overall sense in addition to that one specific mansion. I had never seen the movie version of Gone with the Wind until its first television showing two or three years ago. It was around the same time when I read the book after all these years. I've never lived in the Deep South or in a house anywhere that even remotely resembled Tara. My family had nothing in common with the O'Haras, thank goodness. But that Tara theme had struck me strongly when I had heard excerpts from the Gone With the Wind score on the radio and in concert down through the years. Its atmospheric quality became stronger in my mind after I learned to know the film and the book, but it had that quality before I could possibly have associated it with the excellences and emotions of the words and pictures. It seems to have a similar effect on many persons. Steiner must have realized its potency because he attached it to the most important non-human part of the movie and he gave it so much prominence in his score as a whole. It also figures prominently in recordings and in suites meant for live performance from the film score.

The Tara theme seems to carry anemotional impact, then, even though it's never set to words and sung in the movie, even though it wouldn't be easy to sing if it did possess lyrics to remind listeners of what it's all about. So I started to wonder some more: what causes this or that music, sometimes just a few bars, sometimes an entire composition, to possess special meaning?

On paper, the musical notation for the Tara theme wouldn't look promising. It starts in an unpromising way to the eye: two similar phrases, a third phrase which has the same outline but a larger interval between its first and second notes, and a fourth phrase that sounds positively trite if heard in isolation. But if you listen to those four phrases, the magic occurs (unless you're the reincarnation of Jim Blish, who couldn't endure any Steiner music and once wrote a tremendous denunication of it in VAPA or somewhere). I suspect that the one thing which makes the Tara theme so potent to the ear is the octave leap in its third phrase. Butthis explains nothing. A rise of an octave in a melody doesn't normally bring up emotions and thoughts about the passing of time, the loss of a way of life, the tragedy of war, and similar matters. The steersman sings a little song near the start of Wagner's Flying Dutchman with an octave leap which sounds sort of humorous, even

though his song involves his longing for the girl friend back in port. One of the big themes in Strauss' Don Juan begins with unison French horns indulging in an octave leaps between loud sustained notes, and the interval in this case makes the theme sound heroic and ardent.

One possibility occurred to me. The Tara theme's general construction has some things in common with Annie Laurie. Moreover, that famous melody has a prominent octave leap, although it comes closer to the start than Steiner's use of it. Is it possible that the Tara theme sounds enough like Annie Laurie to cause many listeners to recall half-consciously the happy days of youth, the time of life when most persons got acquainted with the old Scotch song? It's a weak theory, since Annie Laurie of itself hasn't created as much affection for the average person as a lot of other old songs, and I suspect that Annie Laurie is unknown or just a slight acquaintance for most United States residents born in the past quarter-century.

Actually, there are two types of evocative, emotion-laden, nostalgia-inspiring music: things that have this kind of effect on many or most listeners, and those that work their magic on just an isolated individual here and there. The most celebrated example of the latter type must be the fragment from an obscure French violin-piano sonata that obsessed Proust so strongly that it occupies almost as much space in Remembrance of Things Past as the novels' human characters.

I've never been able to find any books on music which give any amount of space to listing the former type, music that has this mysterious appeal to large numbers of listeners. But there's little doubt that such things exist. Think, for instance, about a few bars from Verdi's opera La Traviata which share with the Tara theme an intensity of appeal which seems inexplicable because the notes are so unexceptional by any logical analysis. In the second act, the heroine sings what takes up only one line in the libretto: "Love me, Alfredo, as much as I love you. Goodbye." The Italian text is just as prosaic as the English translation, so the magic can't possibly relate to the words. Verdi set those words to a descending phrase which is hardly more than a plain major scale, repeats the phrase almost unchanged, then adds a third phrase that rises a trifle to a brief climax before resuming the downward scale. Nothing could look simpler in the score. But those few bars have had an extraordinary amount of praise from critics, musicians, and listeners in general, even those who are lukewarm to Verdi's music in general. Verdi didn't develop them into a full-fledged aria, but he must have sensed while composing his opera that he had done something remarkable with the simplest of means, because he devoted half of the first act prelude to that musical idea. It sounds somewhat different in the prelude because it has an oompahpah accompaniment which doesn't recur when Violetta sings it, and Verdi repeats it in the prelude with a new, fancy counterpoint while he allows it to be heard only once in the second act. It never recurs elsewhere in the opera, although Verdi brings back certain other music several times in his score. The only thing that might explain part of the passage's fame is the way it's prepared: the hero and heroine have been exchanging a rather agitated recitative for a minute or two up to this point, not very loudly and with an unobtrusive orchestral background, then Violetta suddenly bursts forth with this long-lined lyric phrase fortissimo. (Half a lifetime later, Verdi pulled exact-

ly the same stunt in the last act of Otello. Desdemona emits an even louder cry of good night to her maid after a much longer section of very soft, slow music. The Otello outburst has much the same contour as the one from Traviata, but it's even shorter and isn't structured as a genuine melody.)

I hope I can make it clear that there's a difference between passages with strange evocative powers and those which simply are smash hits as tunes. Bizet is said on good authority to have commented that he put the Toreador Song into Carmen because the public demanded excrement. But I don't think many of the millions of persons who love that music feel any sentimentality over it.

I don't think there are many people who react as I do to one melody from Tchaikovsky's opera, Eugene Onegin. In the first scene, Tatiana sees Onegin for the first time and thinks she's abruptly madly in love with him. The second scene starts with a dialog for the half-grown girl and her old nurse, the serfdom-Russia type of nurse who was more a parent to children in rich families than the mother and father themselves. The nurse is chattering about how she was subjected to a forced marriage when Tatiana interrupts with an outburst that lasts only eight bars. I'm not going to try to reproduce the cyrillic original text, but its essence is that Tatiana wishes she could put into words how miserable she is. It's set by Tchaikovsky to a theme that isn't typical of his music, which is usually symmetrical with one phrase neatly balanced by another and everything capable of expansion to lengthy melodies. In this case, the first four notes belong to the tonic major chord, then the remainder of the melody goes unpredictably up and down . In case of emergency, it could be broken down into a succession of sequences on two different melodic fragments, but the ear doesn't hear it as such. The accompaniment is a rustling of strings, mostly, principally on a succession of seventh chords after the initial tonic. I haven't seen much discussion of this particular passage in print and I know of nobody else who is as badly smitten by it as I am. But it has the most extraordinary effect on my psyche whenever I hear it and once again, I can't think of a really convincing explanation for the way it's something special to me. It isn't the only thing in this score that is different from Tchaikovsky's usual way of putting music together. One clue to the mystery might be the fact that it is that very rare thing for Tchaikovsky, a tune which has no real conclusion. Like so many of Brahms' melodies, it does not stop because it's finished, but it just keeps going, changing to something else. I'm consoled by the thought that Tchaikovsky must have felt that it's something special, just as I do. He never turns it into a long, complete melody, but he does bring it back several times at key points. Itis heard again in the orchestra a moment later while Tatiana sings in almost a monotone, then the first six bars reappear in the orchestra at the start of the famous letter-writing scene and it makes a sensational impact on me when it turns up again near the end of the opera, when Tatiana who has grown up and married well finds herself suddenly face to face again with Onegin after so many years. If I told a psychiatrist all about this, maybe he would discover that I've written so many locs in my life that any music associated with a long letter possesses a good chance of winning my affection.

Everything I've written about up to now has been a case of a brief musical passage, lasting not more than a minute or two, possessing more power over the listener than it might be expected to have.

But there are some extended works whic fascinate me in much the same manner. One is Massenet's Scenes Alsaciennes, a suite which is dismissed scornfully by most writers as little better than salon music. 'Way back when I was starting to buy 78 rpm records after acquiring my first record-playing equipment which didn't use a spring, I loved the operas of Massenet but only two of them had ever been recorded, Manon and Werther, and I couldn't afford such bulky sets. So I had to settle for the only cheap album that was available, Dimitri Mitropoulos conducting the Minneapolis Symphony Orchestra in Scenes Alsaciennes. I wasn't very familiar with it before acquiring the records. But two or three playings of the set, and I was completely smitten. There are several strange things about this musical love affair. For instance, it was most improbable that these records should have existed in the first place. Mitropoulos was the sort of conductor who was most comfortable in bloodthirsty thrillers like Strauss' Elektra or the louder symphonies of Mahler or Berg operas. What could have possessed him to turn his attention to this gentle, sentimental Massenet work, I can't imagine. Then there's the fact that I had nothing in common with the background of Scenes Alsaciennes, no more than I had with a Georgia antebellum plantation. Not even I am old enough to have lived through the Franco-Prussian War which caused the music to be composed (Alsace-Lorraine went into German hands after the conflict and Massenet wrote his score to preserve the memory of how the area was when it was French), I've never known anyone who was native to that part of Europe, I've never visited it, and my sole previous acquaintance with the region came when I was teaching myself French and struggled through a short story by Daudet, I believe, entitled La Derniere Lecon, about an old teacher's experiences on the day the language taught in the Alsace-Lorraine schools was switched from French to German.

No matter. The records obsessed me, seeming to embody somehow a better way of life that I would like to know. I suspect that my love affair with this Massenet suite was inspired by much the same impulse that has caused Tolkien to become such a favorite among young persons in recent years. The notes included with the album contained an English translation of a few paragraphs that Massenet wrote to explain his score. They are evocative: the drowsy Sunday morning with almost everything except the church and tavern deserted, a couple walking through the fields in the quiet afternoon, then a dance interrupted by the French retreat in the evening. Later, when the lp era arrived, I could buy complete Massenet operas on disc and I discovered that he'd put music in much the same style into parts of Werther which is set in a German town, and at this distance I can understand that the music for the suite sounds more German than French in some sections. But maybe Massenet meant it that way, to symbolize the disputed nationality of the region.

About a year ago, I purchased an lp version of Scenes Alsaciennes. It seemed suitable to own a performance by an orchestra experienced in the Massenet idiom, the Paris Conservatoire Orchestra, and directed by a conductor somewhat less exciting, Albert Wolff. Besides, it's a lot of trouble to take off the Shure lp cartridge from my tone arm, put it in a safe place, get the old GE variable reluctance cartridge which I still use for 78 rpm discs, attach it to the tone arm, and force myself to accept the fact that it really is safe to place such a heavy cartridge on 78 rpm discs, just to hear the Massenet music. And to this day, the lp edition remains unplayed. I have a foolish premonition that something awful will hap-

pen if I am so untrue to the passion of long ago as to listen to a different performance. Or, perhaps, the quieter surfaces of the lp record will cause the music to seem less magical than it does emerging from the hiss and occasional scratches of the old shellac discs. Maybe the Wolff performance is against all expectations a streamlined, no-nonsense one which could spoil the music for me after so many hearings of the uncharacteristic tenderness and fondness Mitropoulos gave to his old records.

Let me finish up this particular topic with a more homely example of instant nostalgia via music. About five years ago, I believe, there was a brief period of prosperity for a song called Me and You and a Dog Named Boo, unless the dog's name was Blue; I've seen it both ways in print and I heard the song most of the time on a tiny transistor radio ~~xxxxxxx~~ which scorned to differentiate in such fine points as a single consonant. I suppose the song was classified as country & ~~xx~~western, both for its musical style and for the import of its lyrics. They concerned a fond look back at the days when a man and woman with their dog had wandered through the South, not making much money, having small adventures, and being very happy. That song had an uncanny ability to make me feel a longing to experience that sort of life, even though I knew simultaneously that I would endure not more than a half-day or so of it before going cataleptic or taking some similarly drastic method of retreating from those conditions. I've never seen "the warm red Georgia clay" that the song speaks of but the lyrics made me feel affection for unproductive soil for the first time since when I made my last mudpie of boyhood. I don't know how much of the song's popularity resulted from a similar effect on lots of people. But I mentioned something to this effect in a fanzine when it was new, and one or two other fans who normally scorn C&W music admitted that the song had had a similar effect on them.

One recent Sunday, I attended a violin-piano recital. The fiddler isn't a first rank celebrity but he has a reputation, has done some recording, and appears with major symphony orchestras. But he has one bad habit: talking from the stage before each item in recital. Just as I dislike modern play production techniques which remove the barrier of the footlights, proscenium and other front-of-stage trappings, because I want the play to be something separate from the real world, just so do I like to hear musicians who do nothing but make music and show no evidence of having any other functions while they're on the stage. The first item on the recital was a Corelli sonata. The violinist bragged about his Guarnerius, and told how he had copied off from an old edition the ornamentation of the violin part in this sonata which is attributed to Corelli himself. His point was that he was enabling us to hear the sonata just as an audience might have heard Corelli play it, and this reactivated my old doubts about the whole modern mania for researching old ways of doing things in order to permit old music to be heard just as it was performed when new.

In this particular instance, the violinist was on shaky ground in several respects. He has wasted his time copying down the figurations, since they've been used in one or two modern editions of Corelli's sonatas. He couldn't be sure if his violin sounds just as Guarnerius violins sounded to Corelli. Aside from such dubious matters as the possible changes in tone that aging of the wood, different ways of making bows, and modern strings might create, his violin is bigger than it was when it came from the

maker's workshop. Every violin of that period in use today has been modified to create a longer neck so extremely high notes which came to be written for violins only later can be performed. Nobody can be sure what the modification may have done to the tone. Then there was the fact that the violinist used a particularly strong vibrato all the way through the sonata. You could start more arguments about the use of vibrato in the late 17th century than you could getjoining a worldcon committee. There's some evidence to support almost any point of view: that vibrato was rarely used, that it was popular in some areas but not in others, that it was in general use but wasn't as pronounced as it is today, that it was employed only at a few key points in a movement where extra expressivity seemed proper, and so on. The pianist used a conservative realization of the bare bones which Corelli put onto paper for the keyboard instrument, which of course wasn't a piano in his lifetime. But nobody can be sure how fancy Corelli expected the keyboard player to be on the basis of the figured bass which is all he put down in many places. There's very little evidence surviving on the matter of how fast or how slow Corelli's music should be performed. And there are other questions. Did Corelli play his sonatas with the compromise pitch for sharps and flats which the piano uses today, or did he use the slightly different pitches for, for instance, a B flat and an A sharp when it didn't create a clash with the keyboard? How many dynamic changes did Corelli permit himself? There are a hundred other musical matters which you can't find unified opinions on. For a while, it seemed as if all the musicologists were agreed on just one thing, that trills began on the upper note until late in the 18th century. Then someone wrote an article for a learned musical periodical about the way trills were produced on several of the old mechanical reproducers of music. The trills usually began on the lower note, sending the researchers into chaos.

To a greater or lesser degree, this uncertainty exists for music of any other period of the past. I've felt all along that those who claim to be giving authentic recreations of old music are kidding themselves or their audiences or both. For that matter, even today when you'd think that mass audiences, recordings, and scientific analysis of waveforms, would permit contemporary musicians to leave an exact record of their performance style, there are problems. Just the other day I saw in print an argument over George Szell on the topic of whether his recorded performances are grossly inferior to the way he conducted the same works before live audiences at concerts. A century from now, there's bound to be controversy over what sort of a singer really was the man who has probably done more recording than any other vocal soloist in serious music, Dietrich Fischer-Dieskau. Collectors of old records in the 21st century will unearth old descriptions of how Fischer-Dieskau almost crooned into the microphone because his voice wasn't a big one, and there will be furious arguments with others who know he appeared successfully on the opera stage and must have had a voice big enough to project over an orchestra through an auditorium. Engineers twiddle their dials so much during symphony orchestra recordings nowadays that it will be impossible for future listeners to determine how much of the tonal balance is achieved by the conductor and how much by electronics. Even though it's possible for a soloist to have a complete performance of a work pieced together from the best portions of many takes, there seems to be a tendency for some musicians to take more chances in live performances before audiences than in

the recording studio. In the concert hall, if the risks are successfully surmounted the performance may be so superb that it will enhance his reputation and if something goes wrong, there won't be any documentary evidence of the missed or wrong notes. For these reasons, I suspect that pirated recordings of live performances will mean more to the future than the much better-sounding studio recordings. For all their sonic shortcomings, the pirated records may come closer to revealing how the musicians sounded in their natural environment.

In general, the further you go back in musical history, the greater are the difficulties in being sure how the music was performed. But there's good reason to believe that ways of doing things could change in an astonishingly short span of time before records were invented. Verdi once complained that the Paris Opera had completely forgotten how to perform Don Carlo, only a dozen years or so after its premiere there. Wagner used to complain late in life that his music was being performed much more slowly than it had been when it was new, two and three decades earlier. When the centenary of Handel's birth was celebrated with a mammoth concert in England, there was a dreadful shock at the out of tune playing of his high trumpet parts. In less than a half-century since Handel was alive to supervise such things, trumpeters had forgotten the way to alter the out-of-tune sounding highest harmonics by changing lip pressure and certain mouthpiece manipulations which brought the pitch into the accepted musical scale.

Then there's the enormous problem of how literally documentary evidence should be interpreted. One simple example is the statement attributed to Beethoven about his Eroica Symphony. When people complained about its len th, he is supposed to have retorted that someday, he would write a symphony that would take an hour to perform. If it's an accurate attribution, does it mean that Beethoven's music was played in his lifetime much more rapidly than today? Performances of the Eroica today generally run between forty and fifty minutes. That's close enough to an hour to make it unlikely that Beethoven would have chosen one hour as the basis for his threat, unless orchestras zipped through the Eroica in perhaps a half-hour at that time. But maybe he didn't make such a statement. Maybe it was customary to make some cuts in the Eroica in performance. Maybe modern conductors miscalculate the proper tempo for just the slow movement, not the entire symphony. Or maybe Beethoven never looked at a clock during a performance of that symphony and just guessed wrong about how long it lasted.

A related problem is the metronome markings which Beethoven left for some of his music. Many of them seem impossibly fast. It would seem to be more evidence for a drastic slowdown in performance paces in the past century and a half, if someone hadn't inspected Beethoven's metronome and found it defective, reading faster than it ticked. But this still doesn't settle the matter. Maybe Beethoven knew his metronome was faulty and borrowed another one for choosing what figures to put on his scores, or maybe his metronome went bad after he'd accomplished this project.

One record company has been issuing for years what ismeant to become the first complete set of Bach's surviving cantatas. The whole arsenal of scholarship has been employed to make this giant project complete authentic. Period instruments are used, and boys are employed for the upper vocal parts which are normally sung nowadays by women, just as in Bach's time. But even if by some mira-

cle the researchers have come up with the right answers to all the questions about performance styles in Bach's day, the fact remains that you hear when you listen to one of these records a performance of a cantata which Bach never intended. Bach never heard his cantatas played through from beginning to end as they are performed nowadays. He wrote them for church use and partway through the cantata (the exact point is still in doubt, and may have varied) the music stopped and the preacher delivered his sermon. I think it's reasonable to assume that Bach would have arranged his music differently if he'd meant it for continuous performance. He might have broken the succession of arias for solo voices which comes in the middle of so many cantatas with another chorus for variety's sake. And I doubt if he would have expected a concert performance of a cantata to end with a simple chorale, as most of them do in the score which was meant for the congregation to join in the concluding hymn.

When you go further than about three centuries back, the uncertainties become overwhelming. Anybody who thinks he can identify a performance of medieval music as even approximately authentic is only guessing. Troubadour songs survive in a skeletonized musical notation which shows roughly the rise and fall of the pitches, nothing more. There is just one exception, a song whose manuscript contains clues to the rhythm. Was this particular song a rare experiment in rhythm and all the other songs were sung in notes of uniform length, or is it just accident that the rhythm was marked on only one manuscript? Much stress is put on paintings as guides to how extremely old music was performed. But when a painting or drawing of a troubadour shows him holding a musical instrument, does it mean that he played his instrument while he sang, or just between verses? Did he pluck the strings of stringed instruments singly or did he use some sort of harmony? Was each verse of those long troubadour songs sung exactly like the others, or were they varied? Were the many troubadour songs which survive only as poetry without music performed to lost melodies or is the lack of musical notation an indication that they were sung to tunes associated with other songs? It's no wonder that recreations of the same troubadour song by two experts may sound exactly like two entirely different compositions today.

If I made my living as a university faculty member whose tenure depended on how many scholarly dissertations I published on the attitude to the tritone during the Counter-Reformation in Provence, I would undoubtedly be confident that I had settled many matters once and for all about the proper performance of old music. But in my amateur status, I'm convinced that it's useless to try to be too authentic. Aside from the impossibility of choosing the reliable evidence out of all the contradictory documents, there's the great probability that performance styles varied wildly from one area to another in the ages before rapid travel, nationalism and recordings had begun to homogenize the way music is played. Besides, there's the irrefutable fact that so many examples of early published music specifically list options for performance: a composition may be identified as suitable for several combinations of instruments or numbers of performers, for instance. This may have been done in some cases to try to boost sales. But if Couperin wrote in the preface to his Lecons de Tenebres that "it is a good idea to add a viola da gamba or a cello to the accompaniment of the organ or harpsichord," would he have objected to the use of a piano or a bassoon? And if he was openminded about the instrumental forces, would he really have cared

if a performer in 1979 achieved exactly the same sort of mordents, turns and other decorations that were utilized in Couperin's lifetime? There has been an enormous vogue for the harpsichord in the past half-century, and I wonder if musicians in the late 18th century when the piano was supplanting the harpsichord would be more amused or horrified by its revival today. In all my reading about things musical, I have yet to come across any expression of regret spoken or printed by anybody during those transition years to the piano. There are regretful remarks about the decline of the clavichord, with its unique ability to vary the sound of a sustained note while it was still sounding and with its innate refusal to be pounded or played melodramatically. But even in the case of the clavichord regrets people seem to have realized that this instrument had to go because it simply couldn't be heard in the new conditions of music-making. I don't think anyone in particular felt a twinge of regret for the passing of the harpsichord and I suspect that it had been a faute de mieux instrument, used only when a keyboard instrument more portable than the organ and louder than the clavichord was needed for accompanying and in small ensembles. I don't like the sound of the harpsichord, although I know I'm in the minority in this reaction.

Today's urge to perform old music authentically strikes me as an insult to serious music, in one respect. This urge seems to imply that the old music doesn't sound good unless it's done in the original manner, and you sometimes read flat statements that this or that old composition can't be endured if played on a piano or transcribed for modern orchestra. All this goes against my belief that good music is tough and is as capable of thriving under different conditions as humans can be healthy over such a wide range of temperatures and humidity. If a composition isn't listenable in some modern arrangement, I think it's bad music, assuming of course that the modern version doesn't tamper with the basic number of notes and the approximate rhythm and velocity that the composer meant them to have. It's hard enough to find ways to perform music, in view of economic and educational circumstances in today's world. Too much emphasis on alleged authenticity will always restrict further the creation of performances because consorts of viols, rebecs, and similar exotica aren't to be found in many places and instruction on using them isn't normally a part of a senior high school's curriculum. Pending the arrival of judgment day, it's impossible to be sure, but I suspect that no great composer who was forced by social or ecclesiastical custom to write treble parts for boys would have done so if female voices had been available to him. I consider the counter-tenor voice to be bearable only when used by the very greatest singers and an unlistenable abomination when it emerges from the mouth of any other male. And I refuse to revise my opinion about what's a good performance every time a researcher resurrects some previously forgotten piece of evidence which requires a change in the concept of authenticity.

Argument by analogy is dubious, but I keep thinking about the printed sheet music which has been published for popular songs over the decades in the United States. A couple of centuries from now, antiquarians may be devoting their lives to recovering and restoring all the sheet music they can find and publishing footnote-laden monographs to prove the worthlessness of all those ancient recordings of jazz bands, dance orchestras, rock groups, and other ensembles, because obviously the sheet music contains the authentic evi-

dence of exactly how they wanted their songs performed, by one vocalist accompanied by a piano and sometimes a guitar or a ukelele, and the orchestras and bands are later perversions of this pristine and pure form of the songs.

In the past few years, I've cut far back on my record-buying. I have never become reconciled to stereo recordings, which I feel are so over-engineered and channeled that they lack the solidity and clarity of the best mono recordings. Moreover, I'm not happy about the way record prices have continued to climb when the record itself costs so little to make; most of the purchaser's money goes into frills and parasite expenses. I've been buying only a few new records, mostly operas which had never previously been available on commercial records. Meanwhile, I've been amusing myself by purchasing scads of records at flea markets, yard sales, and second-hand stores, usually at the rate of three or four for a dollar. I can't get all the precise compositions and performances I would like to own by this form of potluck. But there is the compensating fact that I acquire in this way a lot of recordings I might never have enjoyed if they hadn't become available in used form, and I've grown more familiar with some composers and performers as a result.

But I wonder how many music-lovers in big cities realize the problems that exist for the person who likes serious music and wants to acquire records while living in a smaller town. In this city and its suburbs, there are two stores that specialize in records, selling little else, and perhaps a dozen other stores that carry rather extensive stocks of records. Out of all those sources, there are only two stores which have any appreciable number of serious music records. One has perhaps two hundred different discs on display, the other perhaps twice that number. One of these stores charges about 90% of list price for records containing serious music, the other displays similar prices but has a "classical record club" gimmick which gives anyone who applies for the membership card another ten per cent discount in addition to participation in periodic sales on this or that labels at lower prices. Obviously, my chance of finding a record I want is slim around here and there is little danger that I will see a disc that will inspire me into impulse buying. If I want to listen to newly released records of serious music, I can't tune in the the eight radio stations in this county. Currently none of them devotes any time at all to serious music, unless you count an occasional selection by a choir on a religious program. The nearest public radio stations with good music programming are in Baltimore and Washington, 70 miles away, hard to separate from nearer stations on any but the best FM radios and impossible to hear in such places as my office where the walls are thick. The best I can do is rely on word of mouth, the record magazines, and guesswork to place mail orders for records. As far as I can determine, Washington and Baltimore are also the nearest sources of stores with really adequate stocks of serious music, with one exception. Somehow, about 25 mi es away in Frederick, Md., there's a branch of a Washington record shop that has a first-rate stock of serious music and carries no popular records at all except for a few big bands, Broadway shows, and similar items. So this store is free of the additional problem that the two Hagerstown sources of serious records possess: I needn't listen to music of a type that doesn't appeal to me while I'm looking at the records I'm interested in.

But even this store lacks the type of convenience that I got

used to during the first years of my record-buying career and still miss acutely. It's hard to believe that a whole generation of music-lovers has grown up without ever experiencing the convenience of listening to a record in a booth in the store before deciding whether to buy it, as a check on the presence of any defects in the pressing and the quality of the performance. I understand the reasons why listening booths became extinct in record stores in general: you can't hear a record as quickly as you could in the 78 rpm era, many prospective purchasers have audio equipment superior to that in a record store and couldn't get an adequate idea of the sound in the booth, microgroove records are easier to scratch and otherwise damage than shellacs so they are kept in shrinkwrap until a sale has been made. Still, the disappearance of the listening booth has increased the pig in a poke nature of record-buying for the small town resident. I can order the releases in the Philips series of Haydn operas without much idea of what the performances are like, because it isn't likely that there will be high quality alternative recordings of many of these operas in my lifetime and none of them issued so far has been previously recorded in complete form. But how do I decide which of the many recent Turandot sets I should buy, if I decide to replace or supplement my ancient Cetra set?

The last statistics I saw on the matter indicated that serious music accounts for only about four per cent of all record-buying in the United States. So I don't expect to find the kind of records I'm most interested in available on the radio or in stores as readily as rock and middle of the road categories. But I don't think it unreasonable to wish that four per cent were used as a guideline for availability. That would mean that all-night radio stations in this county would have perhaps 45 minutes of classical records at some point in each day's programming and the daytime-only stations might have a half-hour of serious music daily. If each store selling records in Hagerstown kept a four per cent quota for serious music among its offerings, I'd do more buying locally. There's the special advantage to record stores that a serious music m record will eventually sell, although it may clutter up the racks quite a while. In contrast, fearful quantities of the popular music records which are supposed to be in such demand eventually end up in the 99¢ racks because their day has passed and there's no chance anyone will pay full price for them from now on.

I kept a close watch on record advertisements in the Hagerstown newspapers during 1978 and I didn't see an inch publicizing classical music. This year, one small corner of one advertisement announced a special sale on Angel and Seraphim discs, the only time serious music has entered the local record advertisements in 1979 so far with a quarter of the year departed. Here again, I think a four per cent allotment of space would be fair to the minority of purchasers and might even create sales disproportionate to the space utilized. I know that people are buying serious music on record mm around here. They turn up too often in second-hand condition for it to be probable that they've all been brought into this area by people who have just moved from some other part of the nation to this county. Obviously, record clubs and mail order specialists are getting the local business that stores carrying records could use. The local public library is the only place known to me in Hagerstown that gives serious music on records more than its statistical due. Without measuring, I would estimate that it

has in its total holdings of recordings about one-third serious music, one-third popular music, and one-third miscellaneous things like spoken word, educational, and so forth. There doesn't seem to be much difference to the eye in the average wear and tear on the serious and popular music albums, but there's no way to determine exactly how many individuals borrow any specific album. Of course, the serious music records tend to be in demand longer than most of the popular music performances and it's quite possible that there's more theft of the popular discs by the larcenous type of library patrons, which would cause many of their jackets to vanish before they had time to become too shopworn.

Specializing in popular music doesn't guarantee success for a record store around here. Two stores which sold little but recorded music have closed down here in the past three or four years. Each of them stocked only a token assortment of serious music discs, not the four per cent allotment that I would like to see, although one of the extinct stores did publicize its willingness to place a special order for any serious music disc that a customer wanted. One of these stores was in business here for about three years, while the other one survived only two years. In contrast, when the last two Hagerstown stores which stocked mostly serious music records closed, one had been in business for perhaps a half-century, the other for about fifteen years.

Fans are constantly surprising me. So I really shouldn't be astonished when I encounter yet another fan who likes to read H. L. Mencken. But I had been so long under the delusion that Mencken admiration was mainly a regional habit possessed by those who were within the circulation radius of the Baltimore Sunpapers, now that his linguistic efforts have been superseded by more scholarly efforts and his magazine ventures are known only by reputation, not by availability of the magazines themselves. It's nice to know that fans can recognizem Mencken as a sort of ancestor of Francis T. Laney. Those who do, and even those who haven't much acquaintance with Mencken, would do well to try to dig out a copy of a book which is probably out of print by now, the collection by Louis Cheslock of Mencken's writing about musical things, published by Alfred A. Knopf under the title of H. L. Mencken on Music. I'm sure it only samples the full extent of hidden riches in Mencken's whole output about music, because he wrote such an inconceivable amount on every topic. But it's so much fun to read that you don't long for more until you have finished the volume.

Mencken seems to have had only a few loves in his hectic life: food and drink, which helped to kill him,; one woman whom he soon lost to death; and music, which never betrayed him. Many persons undoubtedly write about music because they had the knack for doing it or because they're forced to do so by economic necessity. But I contend that only a man who loved music and also loved to write about music could have created such things as the tiny summaries of various composers that Mencken published in the Smart Set. Samples: "Richard Strauss--Old home week in Gomorrah. Puccini--Silver macaroni, exquisitely entangled. Debussy--A pretty girl with one blue eye and one brown one. Bach--Genesis I, I."

As an oboist who was rehabilitated, I can appreciate what Mencken wrote about my erstwhile colleagues: "It has been found in Germany that eight per cent of all crimes of violence committed by musicians are to be laid to oboe players, though they constitute less than one per cent of the whole body of performers. A recent

census of Bavaria showed that of the 359 oboe players in that Kingdom, 43 were anarchists and 161 were militant socialists. It is generally believed by other musicians that the plaintive, unearthly note of the oboe is to blame for the eccentricities of its performers. The other men of the orchestra commonly object to sitting next to the oboes. They say that the noise disturbs them and makes them play out of tune." Mencken claimed in the same newspaper article, written as long ago as 1910, that violists are pessimists, and double bass players are heavy drinkers who are immune to the usual effects of alcohol including one particularly heavy drinker who is the only double bassist in Germany who doesn't get rosin dust in his eyes during the ferociously difficult passages for his instrument in the third movement of Beethoven's Fifth Symphony.

Mencken spent most of his literary life writing opinions that nobody else had dared to write or, for that matter, was likely to have thought of conceiving. He didn't stop making a determined effort to do this when writing about music. For example, here are his remarks about the Good Friday music in Parsifal: "Here is the central scene of the piece, the moment of most austere solemnity--and to it Wagner fits music that is so luscious and so fleshy--indeed, so downright lascivious and indecent--that even I, who am almost anesthetic to such provocations, blush every time I hear it. ...When I hear that Char-Freitag music all my Freudian suppressions begin groaning and stretching their legs in the dungeons of my unconscious." Not long ago I read a book about Mencken by a man who collaborated him on several literary projects, if it's possible to collaborate with a tornado. This writer after so many years still seemed upset over such things as Mencken's inventing of quotations and attributing them to various people to make his anthology of famous quotations different from competitors, and the famous time Mencken wrote a long dispatch to the Baltimore Sunpapers during a national convention on why a politician was sure to be nominated, sent it only minutes before this politician was defeated, and merely said: "I hope they have sense enough to put a "not" into my first sentence." The writer seemed to think that this was bad scholarship and unforgivable journalism. But he might as well have complained that it's impossible to send messages with a roman candle or travel with four pinwheels hooked to the axles of a vehicle. Mencken was the ultimate parodistic extension of the reporter who in this complex world can't possibly be wise enough and specialized enough to be wise about mighty occurrences. You just sit back and enjoy Mencken instead of criticizing him for lacking the stature of St. Paul. Thus, this remarkable extract from a newspaper review of a performance of Il Trovatore:

"Mr. Sheehan, who is a gentleman of no small heft, did seem to stand in fear of falling from the window into the subcellar of the tower. There was no platform in the tower and Mr. Sheehan had to climb a ladder to reach the window. As he arose he began--'Ah! how death still delayeth, / Lingers, or seems to fly, / From him who longeth, / From him who longeth to die!' Not until the second 'longeth' did his curly black hair appear above the sill of the barred window, and not until he was near the end of 'Farewell, love! Farewell, Leonora! Farewell!' did he summon up courage to grip the bars and lean out between them. His exit, too, was made painfully and fearfully, and Leonora, singing plaintively below, was plainly apprehensive lest he slip and come crashing down upon her--200 pounds of healthy tenor, full of entrancing melody."

Even when he wasn't writing for the public and there was no need to show off, Mencken was vivid about music. The book contains a long letter which he wrote in 1925 about his tastes in music. It goes on and on but the best parts of it are succinct. The music of Chopin, Mencken says, "is excellent on rainy afternoons in winter, with the fire burning, the shaker full, and the girl somewhat silly." Opera "is to music what a bawdy house is to a cathedral" and jazz "may be defined briefly as the sort of music that the persons who go the opera really like." But when he spoke of something he really loved: "Of Schubert I hesitate to speak. The fellow was scarcely human. His merest belch was as lovely as the song of the sirens. He sweated beauty as naturally as a Christian sweats hate.... There is more music in his 'Deutsche Tanze' than in the whole of Debussy. The fact that these little waltzes and landler are very simple deceives many. But so is the Parthenon simple."

The other day I stumbled across an item in a 1929 Hagerstown newspaper which informed me that symphony orchestras in this city are just a half-century old. There had apparently been concert orchestras that played a serious repertoire before 1929, but they were too small to qualify as symphony groups. The item started me thinking about how it should be that such an impractical thing as a symphony orchestra, so terribly complicated and expensive in a nation which shows little interest in symphonic music, should not only occur once in a city of Hagerstown's size but should also have died twice and returned from the dead both times.

In theory I could have heard the concerts of that first local symphony orchestra, since I was six years old during most of 1929. But I have no memory of having been taken to such concerts in that year or the next year, and I gather from various evidence that this first symphony orchestra didn't survive very long. Its strength was described at various places in publicity items as 50 members and 70 members. A music-loving local dentist was its president, and as conductor, the group borrowed the municipal band conductor. Peter Buys was a first-rate musician who had been a Sousa assistant and bandsman in his youth but he may have been to blame in part for the failure of this orchestra to survive. Whatever its capabilities, the orchestra was given to play exactly the same sort of music that the band performed: potpourris of light opera tunes, compositions as semi-classic composers like Ketelbey, and a few brief samples of more serious music like excerpts from Wagner and Mendelssohn. It must have seemed like a lot of work for small effect, to spend all that time rehearsing and then produce the same sort of music that was available at band concerts. There may have also been a lack of competent musicians in this pioneering group. Buys told me many years later that Hagerstown would never have a lasting symphony orchestra, because of his experiences in the field.

I don't know if a journalist was overdoing things when he proclaimed that persons attending this group's first concert would hear virtually unknown instruments like violas, cellos, and oboes. I am certain that cellos had been played regularly in Hagerstown in small salon groups and I imagine that the band already had an oboe or two in 1929. But judging by newspaper accounts, that first concert drew more than a thousand persons and the applause was impressive. The group was financed by selling "subscriptipns" to the orchestra, and then allowing anyone interested to attend concerts with no admission charge.

By the middle 1930's, that orchestra was gone and it had been

supplanted by a new group which may have had the longest name of any symphonic group in this or any other nation: The Hagerstown, Waynesboro, Chambersburg and Frederick Symphony Orchestra. But the three nearby cities eventually seceded from the name and it became the Hagerstown Symphony Orchestra during the latter part of its existence. This orchestra came closer than the first one had done to offering real symphonic fare, although it had a habit of programming just one movement of a long symphony, and this led to a terrible internal fuss among members over the moral implications of such a practice. I can remember this group quite well, both as a habitue of its concerts and as a musician in it at various times. It must have had sixty or seventy members most of the time. That was a long while ago, I'd had very little experience with hearing live symphony orchestras, and I don't guarantee the accuracy of my memories of how it sounded. But I think it played fairly well and was particularly strong in the string section, the usual bete noir of amateur symphonic groups. A thousand or more persons often attended its concerts. Its greatest moment of glory came the night when Gerald Johnson, a Baltimore Sunpapers writer, showed up for a concert. Like Mencken, he was a writer on general topics who had music as his hobby. Johnson was a strong advocate of amateur music-making, and a book he wrote on that topic, A Little Night Music, sold very well. Johnson went back to Baltimore and wrote a lengthy article about the Hagerstown Symphony Orchestra, proclaiming it better than some professional orchestras he'd heard.

But World War Two and internal feuds did in this group. The official explanation was too many members drafted or working night shifts in war industries, but it's significant that nobody had the heart to try to get another symphony orchestra together for about fifteen years after its decease. Then came the Potomac Symphony Orchestra, which still survives ten years later. This one is different in several respects from its predecessors. Unlike the first two, which to the best of my knowledge had never paid anyone except the conductor, the Potomac Symphony has from time to time brought in a few ringers from outside areas to strengthen its feebler sections. Moreover, after some indecision at first on the question of programming, it has settled down to playing programs almost indistinguishable from those you'd hear in a metropolitan symphony orchestra concert, except for discreet omission of extremely difficult compositions. Still, it has played some Charles Ives.

I've heard perhaps half of the concerts this orchestra has given so far. They have varied wildly in quality. One night, it will sound at least as good as some of the pickup orchestras that have made records in Europe for the second-line record companies. Other times, it has been grotesquely bad. The night they played the Pastoral Symphony, I laughed so much I almost bust a gut. That concert was taped, and if someone could figure out a polite way to suggest it to the orchestra's board, an lp containing that performance of the Beethoven symphony would become as internationally popular and famous as those of the late Florence Foster Jenkins. Most of the time, however, the woodwinds and brass sound pretty good and the strings get into trouble. I can't figure out why this should be so because nowadays, stringed instruments are taught and played in high schools around here, while back in the 1930's and 1940's, only band instruments were used in school music courses. Come to think of it, maybe that's why the situation has changed. Another difference is the poor turnout at the Potomac Symphony's concerts. It's rare that

more than three hundred persons show up. The same auditorium sells out every year for the Civic Concert Association series, and non-professional programs of serious music by other groups have drawn sensational turnouts, too. It isn't the rather high price the Potomac Symphony charges for admission, because in its first few years it operated on the paid subscriber, free admission system, and the audiences were no larger then than they are now. Maybe people are more impatient than they used to be with inconsistent performances or maybe there's still a large pocket of resistence left over from the feuding in the previous incarnation of a Hagerstown symphony group.

A symphony orchestra in a city of Hagerstown's size is certainly not exceptional in the nation. Still, it's a bit surprising that Hagerstownhas spawned three symphonic groups in a half-century, because most cities of this size have a symphony orchestra because of the presence of a college in the immediate vicinity or because the city is quite close to a metropolitan area, two situations which encourage the availability of performers and help build audiences. Hagerstown has no four-year college, although there are three such things within a forty-mile radius and some musicians have come from those institutions. One possible explanation for the persistence of such a difficult musical striving may be the strong German background in this area's populace. It's useless to try to figure out how many persons on the orchestras' rosters had German-speaking ancestors, because so many German names were anglicized soon after the settlers arrived, and the German blood in this area is more copious than a count of German-sounding names would indicate. The presence of a large pipe organ factory in Hagerstown for the past century is something else that may have helped. Most of the laboring force is made up of men who need have skill only in their hands, but there are a fair quantity of workmen who must have musical ability because of the kind of labors they perform in the factory.

Whatever the truth, Hagerstown seems to have had an unusually strong musical inclination down through the years. When that first symphony group was formed, most of the Protestant churches had Sunday school orchestras, some of them with as many as thirty members. There were innumerable dance groups, and one or two theaters still had their own orchestras in 1929 even though the sound movies were posed for the kill of vaudeville and there weren't many silent films being distributed to need the help of an orchestra. There was an incredible number of choral groups in existence here. Hagerstown had a music week every May (and in fact its sponsors claimed that Hagerstown was the first city in the nation to stage such a thing, a boast which I've never been able to prove or disprove) and the seven days of that week were packed and jammed with choral concerts, two or three of them on some nights because there wasn't enough time in the week to get all the groups on the stage at a less hectic pace. The Hagerstown Municipal Band has survived to this very day, and so has another town band in a tiny rural community which seems to be one of the oldest in the nation with a consecutive history. Not many town bands are left in the nation nowadays and it's particularly strange that one should have stayed alive in Hagerstown where municipal financial problems have cuased city hall to stop supporting many of the other things that once received money from the city. But only two of the Sunday school orchestras remain active today, and most of the choral groups are also gone, although I believe the city's churches have more and better choirs than in the averagem United States community. The school music program is extensive and

although I don't hear school ensembles very often nowadays, they sound quite good when I do catch a snatch of their music.

But the alarming thing about music in Hagerstown is probably true of most other communities in the nation: the decline of the piano. It's the only instrument to this day that is cheap enough for most people to own and resourceful enough to perform almost any type of music unhelped by other instruments or singers. There are good reasons for believing that some skill on the piano provides an enormous help to anyone who wants to become a first-rate singer or performer on some other instrument. There's a piano in a prominent place in the background of almost every famous conductor and most of the infamous ones, too. More music in all fields has been arranged for use on the piano than for any other i strument. But the piano is in trouble in Hagerstown. As far as I know, mine is the only one that is ever in use in this block, and I suspect that one active piano to the block is the approximate average for Hagerstown: there aren't that many pianos in the poor white trash parts of town and a somewhat higher number must exist in the older upper class neighborhoods. I almost never hear one being played when I'm in the newer suburbs which specialize in middle and upper class homes. I haven't read a news item about a dispute over a piano being too loud or too late for many years. I can't remember the last time I saw anyone move a piano. Most ominous of all, there's almost no demand for second-hand pianos. The Union Rescue Mission refuses to accept them for its second-hand store most of the time, because it's always overstocked, and those on sale there are priced as low as $25. There are a couple of stores in Hagerstown where pianos are a principal stock in trade and these establishments also handle rather expensively priced used pianos, but I can't imagine who buys them. It's even hard to find piano music for sale in Hagerstown, aside from the piano arrangements of the folios of popular songs. Most of the music racks are given over to publications designed for users of those learn-to-play-in-ten-minutes chord organs or for orchestral instruments. Even the flea markets haven't discovered that some piano music is valuable. Old sheet music of popular songs is today sold for 50¢ to $1 per copy, about ten times what it brought a few years ago, but when a dealer happens across a stack of serious music for the piano, he'll usually be willing to sellit by the boxful for a couple of bucks. I await with apprehension the day some local dealer discovers the catalog of a specialist in music like Theodor Front and frantically signals all his colleagues that it's time to start charging a lot more.

Next to the human voice, the piano has always been the bourgeois medium for making music. The accordion, saxophone, and other faddish instruments have lost popularity, so will the electric guitar eventually, and what will happen if the tradition of music-making on the piano is meanwhile lost? It's a lot of bother to find other people to play with, every time you feel moved to toot on a recorder or try to play the Hindemith tuba sonata. Pianos in the home began to lose popularity just about the time that first symphony group was formed here a half-century ago. I suspect that the poor attendance at concerts by the current group is proof that the long period of growing away from this piano tradition is finally taking a disastrous toll on musical interests. I'd hate to see the public turn into the motionless listeners that some writers claim it has already become. It might really happen soon.

The Worst of Martin

Then, I know, I should have written to you sooner or thank you for the wonderful time we had in Newark. But I had to wait for the pictures to be developed to find out who was there. Besides, now that you've all had your say in the last bundle I can be really scintillating. Yes, the pictures are back, the ones I took with the f4.5 lens, without flash, at night--anyone care for shots of the Holland Tunnel after closing?

What impressed me most about the convention was the way everyone got right down to business--or pleasure. If the lights were any dimmer the convention would have been a minor orgy. Luckily, by mistake, they raided the wedding next door. What a honeymoon!

If you're reading this to see if your name is mentioned, read on! But among some of the lesser known delegates, but quite sociable, were Kinsey, Carstairs, Lord Calvert, and the Gallo twins.

Really though it was a gala occasion--we flew down to Newark--man, did my arms get tired. And then, that convention paper! Well, I want you all to know that I pumped the 5x8. The first time in years! 175 copies! Three days later I was still chinning myself in and out of bed.

You've heard of Galley Alley?--well, this comes from just an old alley. And when you get through reading this I probably won't have an "ally" left. Okay, I'll leave quietly. Apparently this edition is also destined for tremendous success--already three people have labeled it completely ridiculous.

Next convention we're going to have lessons in typesetting. Did you ever see anyone set type upside down and backwards--double? I'm not mentioning any names but it's a "ruthless" approach.

Actually the pictures did come out. I'm probably the only person who has a collection of convention pictures of people taking convention pictures. Let me run through them for you--which is cheaper than having plates made.

There's five of the banquet table--members are either eating or talking--no one listens. Harold, hand on press, pipe approaching mouth, he looks off into space--you can almost hear him say: "I claim these lands for the NAPA." (I didn't say it, I spelled it?) In the background Dick counts his money. Madeleine and Milt--eating. Marge doing the Mambo--at least she calls it the Mambo. Three shots of some jokers presenting certificates to eac other, boy do they look stiff. (This was towards the end of the evening.) One shot of a nude--oh, that's the wrong group. Two shots of a motley crew--whatever that is. Madeline and Jim drinking, and making obscure gestures at me. Two of Verle standing over the pre s in his white jacket--now I think of it!--all you had to do was give the plate a fast spin. Milt taking pictures of Ginny taking pictures. Harold, hand on Al's shoulder, pipe approaching mouth, he looks off into space--you can almost hear him say: "I claim this land for the you-know-who." (Im--Hazel bears watching!) Floyd--counting his money. Lee--counting Floyd's. And a good-looking doll--ah--Madeleine! Someone bend--No!--finally the Holland Tunnel.

Being the obfuscations of Ed Martin, Berlin, Connecticut--writ by 10 pt. Caslon and laboriously cranked off a 15x 32 flat bed Gutenberg, circa 1684.

(This is reprinted from the Winter, 1955, issue of Satyric, published for NAPA but also FAPA-distributed)